



Elsword Time Trouble Volume 6

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0. At the End of Despair

Add opened his eyes and realized that his face was on the ground. Sensation of the floor on his cheek felt cold and chilling.

“This place is.....”

After speaking with a sinking voice, Add tried to get up while looking around but groaned from the pain. His arms hurt as if they were getting torn apart.

Add’s pupils shook narrowly as he looked down at his arms dripping with blood.

“Wait.....”

He didn’t know where this place was. But he knew what just happened.

Devil who destroyed the world and was ridiculing everything was.....

“Ah.....”

Add himself.

“Ahhh...”

Add suppressed himself from screaming. He was filled with impulse of wanting to scream but even screaming felt like a waste of time. In a frantic attempt to suppress his scream, fear and pain, he bit down on his lower lips so hard to the point where blood started dripping down.

Add finally managed to suppress his emotions only after his chin became all bloody. Of course, that didn’t mean he was still sane. How does it make sense to stay sane after he left everyone to die by his future self, that devil, and escaped by himself?

“Exactly how did I.....?”

No matter how much he agonized over it, how much he suppressed his feelings and thought, he still couldn’t figure out how things turned out like this. How can it be possible for him from the future to be the main culprit behind everything?

Add kept thinking despite the burning pain in his arms but he still couldn’t get any answers.

“Kukukuk.....”

One thing he became sure of was the reason for his 20 million failures. What stood in his way wasn't something vague like destiny or some freakish coincidence.

He couldn't achieve his dearest wish because Add from the future, the devil was standing in his way.

"I don't get it. I don't get it at all. But...."

Add's mouth was forming a twisted smile. This wasn't the time to smile but he couldn't bear without smiling.

He ran away by himself leaving all of his comrades behind. So what?

This wasn't even the first time. He already repeatedly rewound time to save Eve and also to prevent others from dying. He must have rewound much more in those times that he couldn't remember.

He didn't have even a speck of wish to sentimentalize and cry about it now. He had to move forward. This wasn't the time to pay attention to the emotion that was filling up his heart.

"There's a new enemy to defeat."

Yes, he actually felt more at ease after thinking like this. He found out the cause of the problem so all he had to do now was to search for a solution.

Add collected his heart then carefully got up from the floor. It was agonizing to do so due to the severe pain in his arm that felt as if they were being shattered.

"Let's heal myself up first.....then come up with a plan."

It wasn't that his wounds healed automatically by time traveling. Add tried to take out a potion from his belt pouch but sighed. All of his potions were shattered due to him blocking D's attack.

"Cheap things."

Well, it was a shockwave that even Dynamos couldn't withstand. It didn't make sense to expect that potions could have withstood it. Add tried to take off his jacket to stop the bleeding then frowned from realizing a strange sensation.

There was a foreign object inside his jacket.

He carefully moved his hand to take it out. It was a white fox. It had the appearance of a small human but it had fox ears on its head and fox tails on its bottom. It must have been hanging on to insides of Add's jacket.

".....What is this?"

But unlike his mouth that reacted out of surprise, Add's clever brain came up with a conclusion instantly.

Eun came into the space-time wormhole together with him in this time travel. But he couldn't see Eun anywhere even though he looked around.

They haven't time traveled together before so he couldn't be sure yet. But.....

"Could this be?"

It was a bit heavy to keep carrying in his hand. This small fox presumed to be Eun didn't show any signs of waking up even though Add put her down on the floor.

She was breathing lightly and looked to be sound asleep.

"....."

Add didn't have an inch of positive impression towards Eun but this wasn't the time to nitpick. Add looked around his surroundings to estimate to which time he time traveled.

This was a room composed of red bricks. There were numerous books on the bookshelf to the side and various suspicious looking potions on the desk.

"I've never seen anything like this before."

Time travels so far had been going back to the point where Add desired. But he couldn't figure out when and where he arrived because Eun was the one who initiated the time travel this time.

It would be simple if he could ask Eun, but she was sound asleep and didn't look like she was waking up any time soon. Add gave up looking around the room and was trying to exit..... When the door suddenly opened and someone entered.

It was Eve.

Eve entered the room and saw Add. She snapped coldly.

"I don't get why you didn't open the door when you were in the room. Just how long are you going to make me wait?"

"....."

"Was your experiment this time sewing up your own mouth?"

Add stared at Eve blankly then quickly turned his head away to avoid her gaze. Looking at Eve made something surge up from his heart and he couldn't stand it. He couldn't make any conclusions about this complicated feeling..... But one thing he was sure of was relief.

He came back in time. He was given another chance to save Eve and the other El Search Party members.

Add ignored the tingling sensation on the tip of his nose as he replied calmly as possible.

“Kukukuk..... You’re the same as ever.”

“I don’t need any incomprehensible answers from you. Let me simply state my business. Why did you call for me, Add?”

“.....”

I wonder why? I want to know too. Add swallowed these words as he stole a look at Eve. He didn’t know where this place was and Eve’s attires were also ones that he had never seen.

Add was about to answer accordingly when Eve frowned.

“What kind of ruckus were you causing for your arms to end up like that?”

“.....It was nothing. I’m going to heal it first so wait.”

Eve shook her head then snapped her finger.

“Humans are so inconvenient. Wait a moment. Oberon!”

Soon as Eve shouted, a dimension gate opened beside her and a Nasod that Add had never seen before appeared.Add’s eyes widened from shock of seeing this.

No way, Eve had this kind of ability? Eve didn’t seem concerned by Add’s shocked reaction as she made a gesture with her chin to order Oberon, the Nasod she just summoned.

“Heal that man’s arm. He must have gotten hurt from doing strange experiments again. How pitiful.”

Why was the tone of Eve’s voice strangely unfriendly? Of course, Add had done things to get on Eve’s nerves many times before but it had a bizarrely different nuance this time.

Anyways, when Oberon, the Nasod Eve summoned slowly approached him, Add unintentionally ended up stepping back.

He would have normally burned up with his desire for research but he was injured right now, most of his Dynamos were broken, Eve was acting bizarrely cold and she was even nonchalantly performing abilities he had never seen before.

It was obvious for Add to get alerted.

‘I knew she could call upon weapons through dimension gates, but was she able to even summon advanced Nasods like this?’

When Add backed up to avoid Oberon, Eve who was looking from the back with her arms crossed sighed reluctantly.

“I don’t get why you’re dragging this on longer than it should. Ophelia!”

Dimension gate opened upon Eve’s call and a female type Nasod appeared this time. Now Add wasn’t just surprised, he was about to faint. Eve right now didn’t seem burdened at all from summoning two entire advanced Nasods through a dimension gate.

Eve who was pompously sitting on her Nasod gears ordered Oberon and Ophelia.

“Treat that man appropriately then make him reveal why he called for me. It doesn’t matter if you do it by force.”

“W, wait!”

Add’s desperate call must have worked because Ophelia and Oberon stopped then looked back at Eve. Eve who was observing while resting her chin on her hand replied stiffly.

“Are you going to say something useless again?”

“.....Where’s everyone else?”

Eve had strangely changed and he couldn’t tell what time period this was. It was the first time something like this had happened.

Something was strange. Things had changed too much compared to time travels up till now.

“Elsword, Chung and Ara are staying at the lodge. Rena and Elesis when to scout the surrou.....”

“What?!”

Add raised his voice. Eve frowned slightly as if she was offended. But Add couldn’t believe the name he just heard.

“E, Elesis?”

“.....Did you even forget our comrade’s name?”

“....”

Add blinked with a blank expression. Elesis isn’t their enemy?

Not only that, but judging from Eve’s tone, she was speaking about Elesis as if she was very familiar, even calling her comrade.

“Strange, this is strange.....”

Add murmured nervously as he stroked his eye patch.

This was totally unfamiliar. He had to admit time travels up till now had been a continuous march of suffering to save the others. But it hadn't been something this unfamiliar.

He felt right now like a sailor who encountered a storm and had been drifting all this time with broken sails and oars...but then suddenly came upon an uninhabited island.

The environment had changed too much.

“Could this be.....?”

“Add, I won’t forgive you if this is a measly joke.”

Eve scolded coldly. Add shook his head frantically to deny.

“I’m not joking! I’m organizing my thoughts so wait, wait just a bit more.”

“.....”

Fact that Add was being serious must have been conveyed because Eve made Ophelia and Oberon back out with a hand gesture. Add nervously looked down at his feet then looked around the room again seeking for an answer.

After time traveling, Eve now had a different atmosphere than before and a different ability. Not just that, but Elesia suddenly became their ally, their comrade.

.....Of course, it was better than her being their enemy. Having her as an ally will help them immensely. But the uneasiness from this unfamiliar situation was much larger than the feeling of gladness.

It felt like he had been sailing through a vast ocean called ‘time’ relying on just one compass, but that compass just broke.

“Could this be.....a time that I can’t remember?”

Did he return to one of the 20 million times that he couldn’t remember? But he couldn’t understand how these kinds of variables could be created.

Add was looking around the room again anxiously but was unable to find anything that caught his attention. But then his eyes suddenly widened.

It’s all red.

“.....”

He saw buildings outside the window. Add suppressed a groan from the appearances and color of the buildings. If Eve’s attire and change in ability had led him towards suspicion, this was a certainty.

“Where..... is this place, Eve?”

“Did you call for me to mock me with such trivial words?”

“.....Please, answer me properly.”

He unconsciously said the word please. Seeing Add blankly look outside the window while asking desperately, Eve sighed then narrowed her eyes.

As if she was reluctantly going to play along.

“This is Lanox.”

Name he had never heard before, scenery he had never seen before.

This made it certain.

This was a time that Add didn't know about.

1. New Comrades

Add made Eve go back for now.

Eve looked quite upset from being called then sent back for no reason but she still ordered Ophelia to treat Add's arms she left.

During that process, Nasod called Oberon got badly scolded by Eve for knocking all the books off the shelves, dropping the anesthetic and scattering the bandages on the floor.

After sending Eve back, Add dropped down to sit on the floor then sighed.

“.....Haah.”

He tried to laugh but couldn't. Anesthetic and potion's effects were kicking in so he could somewhat move his arms now.

But the situation analysis in his head wasn't showing any progress.

“Did I travel back in time too many times? Or did those 20 million failures bring about some sort of unknown variable?”

Well, it was already strange how D, Add from the future and Add from the present could coexist.

Was it even possible for him from the present and him from the future to exist inside the same time?

“....Time paradox.”

Looking back now, Add jumped through time many times but had never thought too deeply about this concept. Add's very first time travel was coming from the far past to the present. This wasn't something that would cause a time paradox.

He didn't have any leisure time to think about such concept during his first time travel in Elder (although it was not first according to Eun) in order to save Eve. And there weren't many troubles during his following time travels so he stopped thinking about it.

“I'm going to go crazy. No, it seems I'm already crazy..... hahaha.”

Add shook his head after recalling his self from the future. You couldn't call that anything else but an insane devil.

Becoming that guy was his future? Just why? He couldn't deny that form was his future but he wasn't able to understand what kind of process would turn him into such a being.

This unknown time he is seeing for the first time.

Coexistence of present and future and ignoring time paradox.

Him from the future that's caught up in lunacy.

This whole situation was all tangled up complicatedly but there wasn't even a single clue that would help him solve it. His head felt like it would explode.

Add was organizing his thoughts one more time.... When a sound of someone yawning was heard from behind him.

“Yaaaawn, I don't know why boy is making such a gloomy face.”

“.....”

Add turned around to see a small fox stretching her arms. She wagged her white tails then smiled with her eyes.

“Shouldn't you be glad that you survived from D?”

“Just explain what's going on.”

Add urged while suppressing the rage surging up from within him. But Eun lay down forwards on the floor leaning her chin on her hands. Then she looked up at Add while only letting out long yawns.

“If you won't explain.....”

“I'll explain. But before that, shall we look around this city first?”

Eun shrugged.

“Now that you know about D, it's now time to solve the questions. I'd like to explain while looking at how the situation has changed.”

“I said.....”

“Would you believe me so easily even if I told you? It would be better to show you the proof rather than giving you just words. Also, it's not like this offer right now has no meaning.”

Eun held out her cute little hands. Eun pouted when Add only continued to look at her with angry eyes.

“Boy has quite a talent for putting girls to shame. What I'm saying is, let's talk while getting some fresh air.”

Add clenched his fists then stood up.

Dynamics were broken and couldn't be used right now.

Add wasn't too keen on walking around the city because Dynamo which gave him multiple features including transport and defense couldn't be used right now. It felt like walking in the streets without wearing an underwear.

"Don't worry too much boy. I'll help if it becomes dangerous."

Eun sitting on Add's shoulder poked his cheek with her tail as if she read his thoughts. He would have normally pushed her off his shoulder but she was difficult to deal with because she was so small right now.

When Add ignored, Eun smiled as she looked forwards.

"This is quite a lively city."

Streets of Lanox were quite busy. Add asked while being frustrated from having to move through crowds of busily moving people.

"Why did you become so small?"

"Isn't space-time wormhole a 1 seater? I became like this because I went out of my way to make various arrangements."

".....It would have been better if you just disappeared."

Eun sighed when Add snapped.

"Cursing and telling me to die, boy must have been quite upset at me."

"Don't joke with me! I.....!"

It was no different from Eun's usual mockeries but Add raised his voice while clenching his fists. His voice was so loud to the point where people passing by were stopping to look at Add and Eun on his shoulder.

Suddenly becoming the center of attention, Add closed his lips tightly then turned around. This was a city that he had no clue about, it didn't matter if anyone saw them or not but this wasn't a topic to talk about while there were people listening.

After entering an empty alley without other presences, Add glared at Eun on his shoulder. Eun sighed then jumped down.

Eun turned to look back after landing on top of pile of boxes.

“You’ll get sick if you hold back things you want to say for so long. Go ahead.”

“You knew everything. About who was standing in my way, how the cause of this entire situation was that thing.....”

He could have just said D, him from the future but he couldn’t bring himself to. So he spoke vaguely instead. Small Eun sitting with her legs crossed nodded.

“That’s right. I knew that the one standing in the way of everything was Prince of Time.”

“Why didn’t you tell me?”

“What would have changed even if I told you?”

Eun smiled coldly but Add didn’t intend to be patient this time. He would have instantly attacked Eun if his Dynamos were still functioning. He was putting in quite an effort to think calmly as possible in this situation and he was somewhat managing to converse with Eun rationally right now.

But he couldn’t withstand each moment of this conversation because something surged up from his heart every time words went back and forth.

He left everyone to be killed.

Not just killed by anyone, but by himself from the future.

He tried to withstand and suppress this thought but it couldn’t help but to burst up.

“Don’t make me laugh! You should have still told me! You at least shouldn’t have hidden this information!”

“Seeing boy this riled up..... make me happy.”

Add unconsciously clenched his fist thinking that Eun was mocking him. But Eun’s smile was coming from the bottom of her heart. Eun closed her eyes as if she was really satisfied. But she then shook her head as if she was feeling pity then opened her eyes.

Her red eyes had a cold gleam.

“But joy is joy, and things I have to say don’t change. If resenting me will help boy pull himself together then go ahead. If boy will feel better by taking my life, and if everything can be solved from that, I’ll gladly accept it.”

“What I’m saying is.....”

“I’ll speak more honestly now that you know about D. Listen up.”

Eun spoke sharply to cut Add’s question off.

“Boy must think I concealed this from him because I was plotting something, but it’s different. There was plotting of course, but this isn’t what I thought of.”

“Then just who.....”

Add shut his mouth after seeing Eun point her finger. Eun’s adorably tiny finger was pointing at Add’s chest.

“This is something boy made me pledge in the past.”

“I did.....?”

Add shivered after realizing everything from Eun’s words.

Over 20 million times. Was he really in the dark about D’s identity through such a long battle? Elesis, Raven, Ran, Karis and Helputt knew very well about D’s identity and his fearsome abilities.

It didn’t make sense for Add who should have been through countless battles to not know about this information at all.

“Then I.....”

“I was asked to hide D’s identity until boy met him personally. Because knowing beforehand might break boy’s resolve.”

“.....”

“And isn’t boy actually despairing and breaking down after meeting D? You didn’t even try to call me to escape using time travel and instead tried to die with everyone else.”

“.....Are you saying that’s wrong?”

Add’s eyes went beyond rage and even showed murderous intent. But Eun glared back ferociously at Add with an unusually icy expression.

“Boy, don’t take life lightly. Even if you saw your comrades die countless times, even if you are in a heartbreak pain, you can never abandon everything and give up from witnessing the truth!”

“That’s.....”

“Boy has to take responsibility for disrupting time!”

Add froze from Eun’s severe scolding that he had never heard before.

“Boy knows who and what D is now. Boy has responsibility and duty to stop D! Since boy is the only one who possesses the possibility of defeating D!”

“I do.....?”

Wasn’t D him from the future? No, even putting that aside, he was a devil that wielded seriously terrifying powers. It was to the point where Elesis and Raven changing sides was understandable.

There was no way Add could beat him in a fight. Wasn’t that why he gave up and tried to die fighting with everyone else?

“How can I.....”

“Believe. That’s what I believed as I fought beside you all this time. Times that boy doesn’t remember, fights that boy won’t remember, I was together with boy through endless flow of time in order to end everything once and for all.”

“.....”

“Believing that boy will defeat the King of Time, destroy that broken world and return everything back to their right places!”

Add was at a loss for words from hearing Eun’s shout. It was difficult to trust all the words of someone who had hidden information all this time, but there was still a truth in what Eun said right now.

Only one who could defeat D was Add.

Eun had believed in this and continued together with him all this time. No, it wasn’t just Eun, Elsword had believed too. Eve, Chung and Ara also believed and willingly stood in D’s way.

Everyone believed in him.

“Do you really think I can control boy’s Dynamos? No. All I did was activate a code that was already made.”

“.....”

Everyone believed that only him from the present could defeat him from the future.

Add closed his lips tightly then collected his mind. Life started returning to his battered body and mind.

He didn't exactly know what these feelings were, but there was a strong feeling that he couldn't just give up like this.

“.....So just what timeline is this?”

“Hmm, that's....”

Eun seemed to drag her words then suddenly started dozing off. It seemed she was trying to keep her eyes open but couldn't.

“What's going on?”

“It's jetlag.....”

Eun spoke this as her body seemed to lean forwards then she fell off the box. It looked like she was going to hit the ground so Add quickly reached out to catch her. She was already sound asleep.

“.....”

Her condition must not be very good and her body becoming smaller must have something to do with it.

Well, they time traveled while Dynamos were all broken. It wasn't strange for some kind of abnormally to happen to Eun who traveled together.

“Only..... I can defeat him.”

Add looked down at Eun while talking to himself. Just like Eun said, soon as Add found out D's identity, he despaired and basically gave up fighting. Remaining there would have resulted in same ending again.

That's why Eun used the hidden feature in the Dynamo to evacuate the current Add. Her goal was to enflame his will to fight then have him defeat D.

In the end, all the fights up till now was to make Add defeat D.

“I don't get it....”

He now understood why Eun kept D's identity a secret. But there were still many questions that weren't answered.

How did D overcome the time paradox? Why did Add forget numerous fights from before? Just what did he go through to turn into a devil called D? And finally, is there even a way to defeat D? There were so many unsolvable questions.

He didn't even know where this place was.

“Lanox.....”

Well, he could gradually figure things out. He should first return to his house(?) then repair the Dynamos. Dynamos were a necessary tool, time travel or regardless.

Add closed his thoughts and was turning around but stopped. Unfamiliar faces were approaching. They were three men with rugged faces.

This was a back alley without any other people. Behind Add was a dead end.

Add realized his situation and scoffed. It seems there were these kinds of distasteful people regardless of any age or city.

Men stopped their steps when Add gave a mocking smile at them. They must have interpreted Add's smile wrong because the man in front held out his hand.

"Kid, can I take a look at that fox?"

"Bunch of idiots....."

So because Add shouted in the streets, he and Eun got unwanted attention from these idiots?

Well, it was true that Eun right now had the form of a very cute but elegant small fox girl.

Add didn't have much interest in pets but he could guess from a single glance that she'd sell very expensively.

"Haha, you're a funny kid...."

"They never understand with just words."

When the men smiled while cracking their necks and fingers, Add smiled back at them while preparing to attack. His head was so complicated anyways. Maybe he'll feel better after blowing away these idiots that don't know their place.....

There were no Dynamos.

"....."

Add realized the situation and froze. He had forgotten that he didn't have his Dynamos. It wasn't just that they weren't here, they were destroyed and in need of repairs.

Add without his Dynamos had zero battle capabilities.

These were small fries he normally wouldn't even give a glance at, but Add right now was powerless. Add hid his turmoil as he slowly backed up. He would get Eun to take care of this if she was normal but she just had to fall asleep right now.

He couldn't let them take Eun. He wasn't fond of her but she was like a road sign for him in this timeline. She will tell him what he has to do from now on.

As Add stepped back, three men slowly approached him. Their eyes were filled with greed. They must be imagining making a big money after selling Eun.

“Hehehe.....”

“We’ll give her back to you after taking a look.”

“You won’t even be able to steal a candy from a baby with those words. Can’t you disguise your words better? You guys must be quite stupid.”

Add mocked while hiding Eun inside his jacket. But three men looked at each other then made a sinister smile. It seemed they were treating Add’s words as a bluff.

But he’ll escape.

Add measured the three’s positions and distances then waited for the right moment. These guys had their guards down as if they had already achieved their goals. This was because while Add was speaking tough, he was still backing out. They must have interpreted this as Add bluffing.

All of this was in Add’s calculations.

He couldn’t fight back but he could escape. On the presumption that he wouldn’t get knocked out from getting hit once.....

“You guys look stupid when you smile. So quit it and come at me.”

“.....”

Three men’s expressions got distorted. Even though they were filled with greed, getting insulted continuously would make them angry.

Alright, let’s start.....

“Stop right there.”

Three men winced then looked back from hearing a clear but chilling voice. Add who was about to escape also followed their gazes to look. There was a silhouette walking towards them at the end of the alleyway.

Dark long hair, melancholically sunken gold eyes.

It was Ara.

“Hahaha.”

Ara was carrying her spear but three men realized that she was a girl then let out a mocking laugh. Ara sighed thinly after getting taken lightly.

“I won’t arrest all of you if you turn back now. But if you are going to continue.....”

One of the guys stepped towards Ara even before she finished speaking.

Bam!!

In that moment, Ara seemed to hold out her palm then the man’s body went flying into the pile of boxes. Gold orb had flown out from Ara’s palm and knocked him out.

Seeing their comrade get done in, other two widened their eyes and tried to move but Ara was already running in swinging her spear widely. It was a swift movement as if a hawk looking for its chance was diving to ruthlessly snatch up a rabbit on the ground. Two men didn’t even get to react as they got hit by the shaft of Ara’s spear.

Baam!! Two men also went flying crashing into the remaining boxes.

Ara shook her head regrettably after taking down three men in an instant.

“People should be uniting their strengths when the world is caught up in disorder..... It seems there are foolish people anywhere you go.”

“.....”

Add was so surprised that he couldn’t speak. Ara could easily defeat three men with her martial art skills. She could probably dispatch even 30 as a warm-up.

But her icy tone and ruthless movements just now was quite different from Ara that he knew. Add looked again wondering if this was someone else, but this was certainly Ara.

“Mr.Add, are you alright?”

Ara approached calmly and gracefully. Her face looked somehow more mature. While Add was at a loss for words at Ara’s different image, Ara made a confused face then approached even faster.

“Could it be you’re hurt.....?”

Tap. Tip of Ara’s feet got caught on a jagged stone. She got surprised and was about to fall over while flailing but Add unknowingly caught her in his arms.

Ara got flustered and apologized while leaning on Add as if she was being embraced by him.

“Thank you for catching me, Mr.Add.”

“Kugh....”

He caught her for now but it felt like his arms were being shattered. Eve had treated his arms but Add was still injured.

Seeing Add continue to groan, Ara tilted her head then quickly backed out with a surprised expression.

“C, could it be that it was difficult for you to catch me because I was too heavy?”

“.....Wait a moment.”

Add ignored Ara’s wild misunderstanding then felt around his jacket to confirm Eun’s location.

He wasn’t sure if time paradox was only a theory or actual truth so he wasn’t sure if he should let Ara meet Eun. There were no instances of them time traveling together before after all.

“There’s no problem.”

“.....I, I had been diligently training every day and night. Could it be because of the meat I ate yesterday.....?”

Add ignored Ara’s seriously concerned voice as he examined Ara’s appearance again. She wasn’t wearing her usual white clothes and was instead wearing clothes with generally black tones. But looking at her face, this was indeed Ara.

“Maybe I should cut down on the meat.....”

Tripping over nothing was like Ara too.

‘.....But she still seems a bit different. Am I just being too sensitive?’

Eve from before was strangely unfamiliar, but to sense the same thing from Ara as well?

Well, delving into detail right now wouldn’t get him any answers.

Add clicked his tongue then started walking forwards.

“You know where everyone else is right? Follow me.”

“Yes, are you going to fight somewhere?”

Add scratched his head for a bit when Ara asked while scurrying to follow him. It would be fastest to ask Eun for what was going on but she was asleep. Ara and Eve seemed slightly different but this wasn’t something to judge right now.

The thing that bothered him the most right now was that Elesis became their ally.

“I’ll first go back to my house to get the Dynamos. Then we’ll go to the lodge where everyone is staying.”

He had to confirm what was going on with his own eyes.

After retrieving the Dynamos for repairs, Add arrived at the Lanox central inn where the El Search Party was supposed to be staying. The way to the inn was complicated so Add didn't expect much from Ara but she didn't get lost.

Add asked because he was marveled by this. Ara told him the reason.

"Don't you remember Mr. Add? I was getting lost so much so you taught me how to memorize."

".....Did I?"

He of course didn't have any recollections of this. But this wasn't the first time things like this had happened. During Add's multiple failures in Elder, he returned to the past to find out that Elsword had grown up and that details of some past events had changed.

Fight where they had struggled against Nasod miners had changed into a fight that they won easily.

'Although the changes right now is bit difficult to digest.....'

It seems Add was indeed the one who called Eve to his house and taught Ara how to find the inn. Add followed Ara into the inn then saw familiar faces immediately.

They were Elsword and Chung sitting on the lounge sofa.

"It's Big Brother Add."

"Mr. Add is here."

Add let out a sigh of relief when Elsword waved his hand. Ara and Eve had changed strangely so he had been worried. But Elsword and Chung were same as ever.

Not only that, Elsword was in his grown up form that awakened to the Memory of Time and Space.

".....That's great."

"Did you meet with Ms. Eve?"

Add nodded to answer Chung's question then sat in front of Elsword. He first needed information to figure out how the situation was turning out, what and when this timeline was and how things have changed.

Add ordered lemonade from the counter then slowly looked around the inn's interior. It was an inn he had never seen. This was an unfamiliar time but he felt more at ease after seeing Elsword's familiar face.

Add started the process of gathering information after he got his lemonade.

“So what’s the situation right now?”

He purposely asked vaguely like this. Asking like this would at least grantee him some information. Then he could use that to figure out their current situation.

“Big Sis and Big Sister Rena went to scout together. They’ll be back soon.”

“I’ll go and tell Ms.Eve that I finished patrolling the town.”

Ara said this then went upstairs. So Eve was upstairs.... And Elesis was their ally as if it was natural.

Add frowned then asked.

“Elsword, who’s the enemy we must defeat?”

“Demons of course. Why would you ask something like that, Big Brother?”

“.....”

So demons were their enemies after all. But the culprit controlling everything behind the demons was D, the future Add.

Chung who was listening added gravely.

“That’s not all. Dragons that colluded with the demons cannot be taken lightly as well.”

Cough! Elsword and Chung widened their eyes in confusion when Add who was drinking his lemonade suddenly started coughing and beating his chest.

“Big Brother?”

“Mr.Add?”

Elsword stood up and tried to pat Add’s back but Add forcefully pushed his hand away.

“.....Dra-, what?”

“Dragons. Mr.Add should know about them as well.”

“That’s right, those guys are persistent..... Although they don’t seem to be in Lanox right now.”

Elsword and Chung were conversing casually but Add’s mind went numb as he listened. He knew what dragons were but he didn’t get how they popped up in this conversation so naturally.

Did they join D because they are Dragons?

Add was so shocked to the point where he unconsciously got these stupid thoughts. Seeing that Add had a blank expression with his mouth opened, Elsword who was conversing idly with Chung looked at Add strangely.

“Big Brother, what’s going on? Are you hurt somewhere?”

“.....Wait. So not just demons.....but dragons are our enemy too?”

Seeing Add groan while pressing his hand down on his forehead, Elsword raised his sword as if it was obvious.

“That’s right, we have to fight and protect Elrios.”

“.....”

This was strange. Add bit down on his lips then shook his head.

The starting point when Add became reluctant about time traveling was.....after witnessing Elsword’s drastic growth.

He was afraid that time traveling would bring about a huge change that couldn’t be managed. But he stopped thinking about such things around the time when he started turning back time to save the lives of the Search Party members.

Fear that he had long forgotten became a reality.

Eve and Ara’s subtle changes and this unfamiliar place called Lanox was one thing. But dragons? Scale of the changes had changed immensely.

Add’s was sighing heavily from a headache when footsteps coming downstairs were heard. Add unknowingly turned around to look towards the direction thinking that it was Eve, but he froze up.

Heavy looking Nasod arm.

It was Raven.

“Ah, Big Brother Raven. Are you alright?”

“I had a good rest.”

Raven spoke composedly as he approached the sofa then sat beside Add. Raven noticed Add staring at him blankly so he turned to look back.

“What’s wrong, Add?”

“.....Kukukuk.”

Well, Elesis became their ally. So Raven becoming their ally wasn’t strange at all! Raven was recently their enemy in Add’s impression. But judging by the way he acted, he was totally their ally right now.

This was an obvious conclusion judging by how Elsword and Chung were accepting Raven being here naturally.

“It’s nothing. I was just thinking that time is fair after all.....”

Raven didn’t say anything in response to Add’s incomprehensible words then went into a deep contemplation while drinking his tea. Add summed up their current situation in his mind then clenched his fists.

This was an unexpected gain. Elesis and now even Raven became their ally. They lost two enemies and gained two allies. The difference in strength between allies and foes had narrowed drastically.

Well, things called dragons were added to their list of foes. But.....who cares?

Elesis, Rena and Raven were all together. Not only that, they had Ara, Elsword, Chung and Eve as well.

This was literally a party straight out of a dream, dream team.

“I’ll ask just in case..... Aisha isn’t here right?”

“Big Sister Aisha went to discuss things with Ms.Edel.”

From Chung’s answer, Add suppressed the urge of wanting to stand up straight and cheer. He was about to go crazy. He was going to die because he was so happy.

He had asked just out of curiosity, but Aisha was here too!!

“S, so everyone is gathered.....”

Other three didn’t seem to understand what Add was saying but it didn’t matter. He was so happy that he was about to go crazy.

Add looked down at his knees while grinding his teeth.

“Kukukuk, that’s right. As to be expected from me. Perfect, this is a perfect plan. Kahahahaha!!”

He almost gave up everything because of D’s overwhelming power. But the story was different like this. Gap in strength between allies and foes had narrowed drastically.

They could win.

Elsword, Aisha, Rena, Raven, Eve, Chung, Ara, Elesis and Add.

With these 9 together, they even had a chance against D. Best members were all gathered!

Add was shivering with joy when Raven suddenly stretched out his right arm to touch Add's head. Even while caught up in joy, Add wondered what Raven was up to and tried to push his arm away. But Raven asked seriously.

"You became shorter, Add."

"What?"

Add unknowingly frowned after getting the topic he was sensitive about touched upon. He never cared too much about his own appearance but he should be at least above average. He had never heard from anyone that he was short.

Add was about to leap into rage but Raven stared seriously.

"Was there some kind of problem?"

"Come to think of it, Big Brother Add. You look.....a bit younger."

"What?"

Add blankly stroked his own face from Elsword's words. His cheeks felt a bit smooth but he couldn't tell if this was anything different than usual.

No, of course. How many guys were out there that cared about smoothness and bounciness of their cheek?

But Raven silently stroked Add's head, shoulder and arms then asked gravely.

"You're injured. Did you do some kind of dangerous experiment?"

".....Well, you could say that."

At Add's words, Raven nodded then backed up while withdrawing his hand.

"Be careful."

"Kukuk, you don't have to worry."

Add couldn't think of any better answer so he answered appropriately then put the Dynamos on the table and started the repairs. They were completely destroyed but this could be covered with the spare parts he had.

Add normally did this kind of repairs alone in his room but this time was an exception. He wanted to listen in on other members' conversation and gather information.

Seeing Add focus on repairs and Raven silently drink tea, Elsword spoke up.

“So Big Brother Raven, Big Brother Add, how are we going to fight from now on?”

“I’m planning to listen to what Rena and Elesis has to say. Their judgements should be accurate.”

“Maybe I should have followed Big Sis too.”

“Only Ara could possibly keep up with those two. It’s better for us to stay behind.”

Raven answered sincerely. Add stopped his repairs and stole a glance at Raven. Judging by how Raven spoke, he could tell that Raven was a sincere and thoughtful man.

And he didn’t even need to confirm his skills.

‘.....Why did Elesis and Raven join D?’

Because they couldn’t win against D? Because they wanted to be on the winning side? Add was sure they weren’t people that would act according to such materialistic desires. There was D who broke the world and judging how Eun’s plan was to destroy that broken world, two of them must have had thoughts of their own regarding this matter.

Elesis’s decision seemed to be related to Elsword, but Add didn’t understand Raven’s decision.

Add asked abruptly after recalling the last scene before he time traveled, Raven raising his blade while carrying unconscious Rena.

“I got something to ask you, Raven.”

When Raven stared back, Add asked seriously.

“What will you do if Rena was in danger?”

“I’ll fight and save her.”

Raven answered first then asked.

“Why are you confirming this?”

“.....What if an overwhelming enemy stands in the way and she couldn’t be saved?”

At Add’s question, Elsword suddenly made fake coughs. After getting everyone’s attention, Elsword reprimanded calmly.

“Big Brother Add, I don’t know what you’re thinking..... But why are you asking such a thing to Big Brother Raven?”

“It’s fine, Elsword.”

Raven shook his head then answered composedly.

“You asking this must be related to our plan. If I’m not able to save her.....I’ll fight together with her till the end.”

“.....”

Add nodded silently from the weight of Raven’s answer. Raven wasn’t joking when he said those words which meant he’d rather die together with her if he’s not able to save her.

“.....I’ll keep that in mind for the plan.”

He could somewhat guess why Raven stood on D’s side. Rena was the most powerful amongst the previous 5 Elf Search Party members. But even she had moments where she almost lost her life.

Fighting against D will result in certain defeat. So he’ll go far as to join the demons if it was for saving Rena.

That must have been Raven’s decision at the time. Considering Add’s values of doing anything possible in order to save his precious person, Raven’s decision was totally understandable.

Add was organizing his thoughts when Raven hesitated for a moment then added.

“I meant that I want to support her much as possible since she’s overworking herself due to the Elf race being at the brink of extinction.”

“....What?”

It seems I’m getting surprised a lot today. Add thought this to himself but could hide his shock. Dragons and now crisis of the Elf race. Another strange information had come up.

“I’ll obviously fight to save you too if you are in danger, Add.”

“Whatever. So wait, Elves are in danger?”

“What’s wrong, Mr.Add?”

Judging by how Chung was making a strange expression, this must be an obvious information as well. Add shook his head while sighing.

“.....Seriously, what is going on?”

Dragons come out of nowhere and now Elves are at a brink of extinction? Too many things had changed from this time travel. More he found out, more things got complicated. But Add focused his thoughts on one point.

These trivial changes didn’t matter. Important point was that 9 of them, the full power Elf Search Party were assembled.

It wasn't like there was a concrete plan yet but he could see the hopes of defeating D now. Add was letting off a delightful smile.....when a loud noise came from outside the door.

Craaash!!

Then a man broke through the door and rolled inside. All of the El Search Party members' eyes focused on the unconscious man who came rolling all the way near the sofa.

"What's going on.....?"

Elsword was about to quickly stand up when a furious voice rang out from outside.

"Punks!!"

".....Ah, it's Big Sister Rena."

Add asked again when Elsword who was about to stand up sat back down. Add knew all he's been doing was asking questions but he couldn't help but to ask again.

"Wait? Who?"

"That was Big Sister Rena's voice."

Add's face turned blank when Elsword waved his hand as if he wasn't interested. Of course, there was no need to doubt Rena's skill. No one probably needs to go outside to help her.

You could tell from a single glance that this guy who rolled inside the inn was a small fry. Add didn't even need to get his hands dirty.

".....That was Rena?"

Well, the voice did sound a bit familiar. Seeing that Raven had already gotten up and was heading towards the door, Add also stood up and followed him. Recalling the voice again, it was indeed Rena's voice but Add somehow wanted to deny this.

Add followed Raven and came out to the streets. He then groaned with a blank expression.

".....That's Rena?"

Beauty that one couldn't avert their gaze from was fighting a group of men by herself. Looking at her face, it was indeed Rena.... But how she was waving her sword and weaving through bunch of heavily built men felt strange.

Sword? Rena?

Why was someone so skilled with a bow to the point where she could be praised as a goddess of archery carrying a sword and fighting in close quarters?

Of course, Rena was Rena so those men went flying and crashing into a wall or fell each time her sword flashed. She looked ferocious like a lion that jumped into a herd of sheep. It looked as if she was going to destroy everything that stood in her way.

Those men will cower in fear from just seeing Rena's shadow from now on.

Looking closely, the sword was only for threatening. She was using a clever technique of swinging her sword to lure out enemy's weak points then finishing up with physical strikes. Those men dodged Rena's sword only to go flying from her kick or get knocked out from getting hit by her elbow. It was a 1 vs many fight with weapons involved but not only was Rena threatening her opponents, she was taking them all down while not letting even a strand of her hair be harmed.

Although she was fighting up close with a sword rather than a bow, the fact that Rena was an outstandingly skilled individual didn't change.

"How dare you make mockery of Elves in front of me!"

From Rena's furious shout, Add unconsciously looked at Raven standing beside him. But Raven was just staring at Rena quietly. At how Raven was accepting this situation as if it was natural, Add asked slowly.

".....That's Rena?"

That woman who was throwing those men around and knocking them out like an enraged lion? Not just that, but her expression was so cold to the point where ice would be jealous. Never mind smiling, her mouth was stiff and her eyes were sharp.

She was still extremely beautiful.... But her atmosphere was totally different.

Raven must have interpreted Add's question differently because he answered calmly.

"People that just arrived in Lanox must have messed with an Elf."

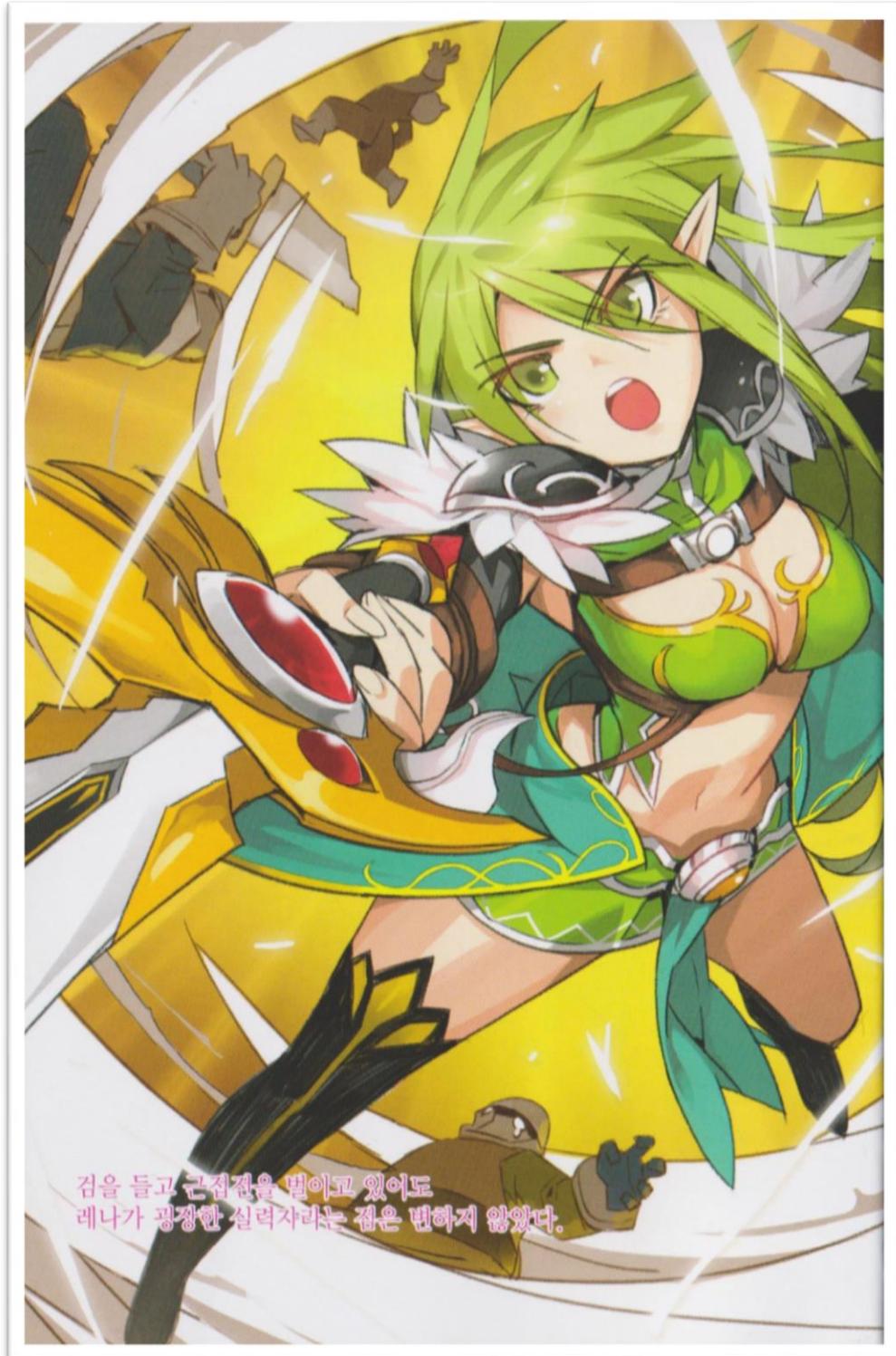
"....."

That wasn't the answer Add was looking for so he just continued to stare forwards with a blank expression. The fight was almost over. 1 vs 25, but one was overpowering 25. She wasn't stopping her storm of attacks which completely crushed her opponents to the point of leaving them with traumas.

She was still beautiful and strong. But.....

".....That's not Rena."

He didn't know what to say.



검을 들고 근접전을 벌이고 있어도
레나가 굉장한 실력자라는 점은 변하지 않았다.

Although she was fighting up close with a sword, the fact that Rena was an outstandingly skilled individual didn't change.

Dozens of men were sprawled out on the ground thanks to Rena who fought with elegant movements as if she was dancing. People who were observing were all surprised and were making a face pondering if they should clap or not. But Rena didn't care about their reactions and put her sword back in its sheath.

Not even a single drop of blood got on her sword from the fight just now. Add who was watching was filled with feelings of not knowing what to say. She did hold back, but this Rena who struck strongly like an angry horse was way off from Rena that he had known.

Rena was wiping the dust off her hands after finishing the situation when she noticed Raven and Add and approached them.

“You were watching?”

Cold and stiff voice, it was to the point of suspecting if she was mimicking Eve. Add had a blank face but Rena didn't care and spoke to Raven.

“I'll go explain this to Edel. Stay here until then, Raven.”

“No, I'll go to Edel. You must have just returned from scouting the Ashen Land. Get some rest, Rena.”

“They were just small fries. Also, it was a problem related to Elves so I'll....”

“All of us were asked by Edel to keep public order of Lanox. So it's not just your problem.”

Raven ended their conversation like that then approached the unconscious men. Rena looked for a moment at Raven's back as he determined who to arrest. She then turned around towards Add.

“Add, who's in the inn right now?”

“....Everyone who should be.”

Add was reluctant but answered. How she beat down those men mercilessly, cold low-pitch voice coming from that stiff face.... This Rena was very different from Rena that Add had known.

Eve and Ara were slightly different too but Rena had changed drastically. The difference was clear as spring breeze and winter gale.

“Then I'll report the results of my scouting mission. Tell everyone to gather.”

“I'll do that....”

Add nodded hesitantly. Unfamiliar events were occurring continuously but he had no choice but to follow along for now.

Rena's return from her scouting mission.

Elsword, Eve, Chung, Ara and Add gathered to listen to Rena's short explanation.

"We finished dealing with Ash Covered Village. We were originally only going to scout it out. But.....we got found out so Elesis and I took care of everything."

"Weren't there lots of enemies?"

Rena shook her head at Ara's question.

"No, enemies were acting strangely. It was like they weren't fighting out of their own will so we took them down easily."

Rena continued after confidently revealing that she and Elesis took care of all the enemies on their own.

"I discussed about this with Elesis too and we determined that there was no strategic value in Ash Covered Village. But Demons were occupying that place despite this. Scar, he must be provoking us to draw us in."

".....Is it okay to respond to their provocation?"

Scar? It sounded like he's a leader of demons. Is he a general? Add asked anyways because he didn't like how they went out of their way to liberate a village despite knowing it was a bait. Rena replied coldly.

"We need to secure a foothold in the middle anyways in order to advance to the Grand Cavern. Even if that's what Scar wants us to do."

"Securing a forward base with only two of you, impressive."

"Now we can head to the Temple of Fire."

"Yes, and Scar will be.....waiting for us in the Grand Cavern. It's time for the final confrontation."

It was a grave atmosphere where everyone was resolving themselves for the final fight. But only Add listened with a blank expression. He somewhat had a guess by now.... But it still felt like he was left out of the conversation.

"Wait, wait."

Add raised his hand and everyone's gazes gathered on him. He didn't want to say something like this when everyone was enflaming their fighting spirits.....

“I’m sorry but I have no idea what you guys are talking about. So explain it in a way I can understand easily.”

“Talk nonsense when you are alone, Add.”

Eve warned coldly but Add didn’t back out. Well, it was true that Eve’s reaction was very cold but it was understandable.

This would look like Add was spoiling the mood when everyone was seriously preparing for the final battle.

“I’m sorry..... But I seriously don’t understand what everyone is talking about. Well, let’s say my recent memories disappeared due to the effects of accident during my experiment. So explain what’s going on to me.”

“Are you okay, Mr.Add?”

“You can rest if you are tired, Big Brother Add.”

Add shook his head at Chung and Elsword’s kind words.

“I can tell by the atmosphere that this is not a time to rest. So explain in detail how the situation is turning out.”

“So we were.....trying to stop Scar who’s plotting to destroy Elrios right?”

Ara trailed her words unconfidently. Rena nodded.

“That’s right. Elrios will be completely destroyed if Scar resurrects the demon god. We must stop him.”

“.....So who’s Scar?”

“He’s a demon general.”

It wasn’t a name he had heard before. Add groaned as he organized his thoughts. New locations like Lanox, Temple of Fire and Grand Cavern were coming up one after another.

Not just that, but the name of their enemy was different.

“I’m going to ask just in case..... You all know about D right?”

When Add asked after a hesitation, El Search Party members all looked confused.

“No, who’s that?”

“Is it a new enemy?”

“I’ve never heard about this.”

“Is it a new demon?”

Rena coldly concluded.

“Add, we’re in middle of a strategy meeting. Drop the idle talk.”

“.....No one heard about him?”

Add’s heart sunk. Elsword and Ara not knowing could be understandable but not even Rena had heard about him? Everyone was acting like they just heard the name for the first time.

Raven and Aisha weren’t here but it felt like they’d give the same answer. Add sighed while pressing down on his complicated head.

“I see, so a new demon appeared, and we joined together to stop him.So what’s our plan from now on?”

“Elesis is waiting for us in the Ash Covered Village. We’ll go join up with her.”

“And after we join up with her?”

Add was asking about their long term plan. Rena gave an additional explanation.

“We have to join up with Fire Priestess who’s supposed to be at the Temple of Fire soon as possible. Then we’ll also find out about movements of Scar and the other demons.”

“.....Priestess?”

This was something he had never heard before as well. But everyone looked as if they knew about it already. Add bit his lowered lips as he shook his head widely. This timeline, this world was too different.

This time travel had changed too many things.

Well, 9 El Search Party members joining together wasn’t something that had happened in the previous time travels in the first place.

“Fine, I roughly understood our situation. So when are we heading towards Ash Covered Village?”

“We’ll head out right away when Raven and Aisha comes back. We can’t leave Elesis by herself for too long after all. Everyone, get ready to depart.”

At Rena’s word, the El Search Party members all nodded then got up from their seats. Add waved his hand while sighing.

“.....I’ll be repairing the Dynamos while everyone gets ready.”

When everyone went up to the 2nd floor, Add started numbly repairing his Dynamos. Dynamos were basically equivalent to his hands and feet. He had repaired them so many times that he could even repair them with his eyes closed.

“Just....what’s going on around here?”

New town, Search Party members’ changed personalities..... Well, these could be understandable. Elsword’s personality had changed from growing up too.

But it was strange that no one knew about D.

“Could it be that D had a hand in this too?”

He was someone who disrupted the world saying he’ll rule over time and space. He certainly was capable of creating this strange situation.

“I still don’t get it.”

So many new situations were coming up that he even had thoughts about honestly revealing about time travel and discussing with everyone after.

“Everyone is busy preparing to depart so why is boy the only one lazing around?”

Add lifted his clothes from the voice that came from inside his jacket. Eun jumped out of the inner pocket then landed on the table lightly.

“It’s troublesome because I’m getting sleepy more often. Well, it’s to be expected from getting older.”

“.....Explain.”

“Boy must think of me as granny who likes to tell him old tales. You keep asking me for a story every time you see me.”

“I’m not in the mood for jokes.”

Add stopped moving his hands that were repairing and glared at Eun. But that only lasted for a moment as Add withdrew strength from his eyes then shook his head. A heavy fatigue rushed in as his head started aching.

It hasn’t been too long since he left his comrades behind in front of D. Also the time he arrived now was so nonsensical.

“Alright, I’ll explain. What should I explain to you?”

“Where is this place?”

“Didn’t they say it’s Lanox already, boy?”

He didn't even have energy to get angry. Add loosened up then re-explained the current situation.

"I've been the one choosing the time period in time travels up till now. But this is a place we've reached due to the emergency code you activated..... It's much too different from the place I know."

"I'll say this now, I'm not the one who chose this coordinate."

".....But you should know the reason why."

Eun nodded meekly.

"It's to defeat D of course."

"There's no D in this place. No one knows about D. Did he hide somewhere?"

Eun was about to answer when footsteps coming downstairs was heard. Add quickly tried to hide Eun but she swiftly dodged Add's hand.

"It's not something you should hide forever anyways."

So did time paradox not matter? Add thought Eun had her reasons so he turned around to see that it was Eve who had come downstairs. Eve's gaze slowly moved from Add then to Dynamos that were in middle of repairs. Her gaze finally fixed on Eun who was sitting confidently on top of Add's lap before Add had realized she was there.

"What is that?"

"I'm Add's pet fox, Geum. I'm in similar circumstance to Ophelia that girl commands."

Add was dumbfounded from Eun's answer but Eve seemed like she understood.

"So you made a helper, Add."

".....I guess."

He shouldn't have to deny it. When Add looked at her nervously, Eve stared straightly back at him for a while then slightly turned her head away.

"Did you call for me today to show me that helper?"

"It wasn't because of that....."

"Then why did you?"

".....I'll explain later. I'm bit tired right now."

It was a rare chance to speak with Eve but Eun's explanation was more urgent right now. It should be much faster to question Eun for information than asking Eve in a roundabout way.

Eve was staring at Add straightly then turned around.

“I don’t need something like your heart, Add.”

“....What?”

Eve didn’t answer and left the inn. Add was frowning from not being able to understand the words Eve left him when Eun giggled.

“Girl is chilly even in here. Raising those affection points again will be rigorous, so rigorous.”

“What do you mean by an affection point....?”

“Oh, you don’t know? Future becomes easier if you manage the affection points properly. Leaving affection points empty for a long time will make them sink bottomlessly so be sure to check them often. I’ll become an exemplary textbook for you.”

Add ignored the incomprehensible words as he grabbed Eun by the collar then sat her back on the table.

“Just finish what you were talking about before. So what am I supposed to do from now on?”

“You should first repair the Dynamos then heal up. You might as well have to solve this world’s problem too. Since there’s one process that’s needed to go back to the original world.”

“....What?”

The words Eun used felt odd. Seeing that Add frowned, Eun let off a cold smile. It was a very sharp smile for someone who had such a small and cute appearance.

“Boy is too obsessed with time. That’s why your thought process is getting blocked. Are you thinking that this is merely a place that has a time trouble?”

“What do you mean? I certainly entered through a space-time wormhole....”

But it wasn’t Add who determined the destination this time. Add was about to reply while pondering Eun’s words then he froze up.

“Wouldn’t you agree that it’s difficult for circumstances to change this drastically by merely going backwards in time?”

“.....”

A chill went down Add’s spine from Eun’s words. That’s right, Eun was right. Too many things had changed.....to consider this a butterfly effect happening after time travel.

This was a space-time that had more things Add didn’t know than things he knew. What has to happen.....to make such a thing possible?

Add asked while doubting himself. He couldn't believe his conclusion.

Preconceived notion had formed in Add's head due to his multiple time travels. Solve things with time travel if things go wrong. That's why he had thought this was a time travel as well.....

"Did I.....not time travel?"

Eun erased her smile as she nodded. She looked far off into the distance as she declared indifferently.

"Describing it as a place like this should be easier to understand. Place that's similar but different, different but similar. There are things boy knows and doesn't know, a world that has been running on its own rules and time. We're outsiders here."

"That means....."

Eun declared after hearing Add's groan.

"To escape from D, we jumped to an another universe."

This wasn't a place he arrived due to time traveling.

This was a completely different world, a different universe.

2. New Comrades Again

Time and space intersect with each other to formulate a world. Creatures live, die and create history within the intersection of x-axis of time and y-axis of space.

Add's time travel was basically going back and forth between that history by 1 second before, 3 minutes later or 10 days before. But while there were various small discrepancies and changes, large flow of events hadn't changed during that process.

But to escape from D's grasp, Add and Eun completely left the restrictions of time and space to jump into a totally new place.

Ashen Land.

El Search Party started crossing the barren wasteland to head towards the Ash Covered Village.

“There’s really not a single blade of grass here.”

“There’s a story that it became like this because of dragon’s flame.”

“Dragons..... Big sis and Big Sister Rena faced them before right? How strong are they?”

“You can’t face them lightly. Elesis and I both struggled against them so avoid them if possible.”

“Got it Elsword?”

When Aisha spoke while smiling as if saying ‘I told you so’, Elsword replied boldly.

“But we have to fight them eventually.”

“Let’s focus only on Scar for now.”

Elsword nodded at Raven’s words. Conversations were going back and forth but Add who was watching the party from the back sighed.

This Aisha wasn’t the Princess of Dimensions that Add knew. He did ask her about D just in case but only got a reply that she never heard of the name.

Add moved his gaze to look at the backs of Rena who was walking at head of the group and Ara who was walking quietly. They looked like his long time party members but they weren’t Rena and Ara that he knew.

Add finally stared intently at Eve’s back. It was an image he had seen countless times ever since the El Search Party was formed in Ruben.

But this wasn't Eve that Add knew either.

Add sighed repeatedly as he recalled his conversation with Eun.

“....Different universe? What do you mean?”

“Boy should somewhat know already. It's a higher concept than dimensions. It's a place where even a single pebble could be different.”

Eun explained calmly to Add who was in shock.

“For example, Demon Realm and Elrios are different dimensions. But they existed in the same universe. But there can be a universe where a Demon Realm doesn't exist.”

“...I heard dragons are helping the demons in here.”

“Yes, there are many things here that are different from the universe we know. Do you have a decent understanding now?”

At Eun's explanation, Add clenched down on his teeth.

Different universe, it was unbelievable but he performed a universe travel this time. Many things start making sense if he thought about it this way.

Dragon, Scar and entirely different personalities of the El Search Party members. It all makes sense if you considered them as changes that happened because of universe travel rather than time travel.

“It wasn't a time travel and we traveled to an entirely different universe? For what purpose?”

“There should be a clue to defeating D here. I don't know the details either.”

Add wondered if Eun really didn't know and tried asking again but she shook her head in response.

“Then how am I supposed to go back? By your tone just now, just repairing the Dynamos won't do it. Why do this when I didn't even ask....”

Add got a hunch why they hopped universes in middle his speech so he trailed his words. Eun nodded to confirm his speculation.

“We had to travel to a different universe in order to escape from D. We couldn't have escaped from his grasp with just a simple time travel.”

“.....”

Add got a chill when his speculation became a certainty.

If Add could time travel, then D, his future self could do so as well. Add had solved all sorts of problems with time travel so far but that didn't work on D.

Time travel was Add's trump card, a move that could turn around a disadvantageous situation. But D who proclaimed himself as King of Time should be even more proficient at time travel than Add.

He understood why they crossed over to another dimension. They wouldn't have been able to escape from D's grasp otherwise.

“Just.... How am I supposed to defeat that guy?”

“We'll have to find a way in here.”

Add couldn't retort to Eun's cold words. They couldn't return without finding a way to get rid of D.

“For boy, returning to the original universe might be more difficult than finding out a way to defeat D. Boy has lived dissipatedly while ignoring the existence of affection points. Boy is now in for a lot of pain.”

“.....”

Add frowned when Eun giggled amusedly. The way she was talking had been bothering him for a while.

“What do I need to do to go back to the original universe? No matter how difficult it is....”

“You're ready no matter how difficult of a trial is waiting for you? Is that what you're saying? Are you sure you won't regret those words?”

Add hesitated for a moment when Eun asked with a gleam in her eyes as if she had been waiting for this. It somehow felt like a bottomless swamp was kept tempting him, trying to drag him down.

But that lasted just for a moment. He didn't intend to stay here forever. He was filled with desire to return soon as possible and defeat D.

“Yes, I'll do whatever it takes. If I can't return.... you can't return either right? I don't know how difficult it will be but you'll need to help me as well.”

“Boy is clever as always. Yes, that's correct. We are two minds but one body, ones who dream the same dream.”

“It's neither of those. We just happened to cross each other by coincidence so don't discretely put us together.”

Eun gave a cute wink when Add drew the line with a grave tone. He had to admit she was cute when she did that in her small form.

Add quickly pressed the issue again after realizing that he unknowingly forgot to hide his inner evaluation of Eun's small form.

"So what is the way to return to the original univer....."

"Kiss."

"....."

I must have heard it wrong. That's what Add thought but Eun spoke again to confirm that he hadn't misheard.

"Kiss with a setting sun, blazing ocean in the background. That's how to open up a way to go back."

"....."

She must be joking right? Add stared at Eun with a frozen expression but Eun shrugged as if to tell him 'why are you looking at me strangely like that?'

"Isn't it a princess's kiss that wakes the sleeping prince? It's a return trigger so it must be fulfilled."

".....Are you serious?"

He knew what kiss was only by an empirical sense. He also got some from his mother when he was very young as a sign telling him to grow up well.

But that was everything. He never had any interest in it outside of that. Putting in all sorts of efforts to return to his original past wasn't enough, so why did something like a kiss matter? It was a waste of time!

Eun made a prudish expression as she wagged her tail.

"Geez, boy is so cruel. You can't continue to tease an old fox like this. Well, I can show you how it's done personally if necessary."

"Drop the talk that doesn't make sense."

Even while Add answered blankly, he still couldn't understand what kind of process had to take place in order to bring about this kind of conclusion.

"Why does something like a kiss.....required for me to return to my original universe? This isn't some joke inside a fairy tale."

"Because if El Search Party sent you here, then El Search Party has to send you back."

"....."

Add suddenly realized what she meant. Eun must have read this and added while smiling.

“Boy must have realized this already but the time-space coordinate that was set while universe traveling was the El Search Party. It wasn’t a coincidence that we arrived in a universe with the El Search Party. Rather, we could arrive here because it was a universe with the El Search Party.”

“.....But we didn’t need that kind of process when we came here.”

“Do you really think there wasn’t?”

Does that mean Add prepared this beforehand during the time that he couldn’t remember? He couldn’t refute if that was the case. Although he still couldn’t understand the exact principle behind the whole thing.

“Space-time has a will. An action that most strongly connects the souls of people with wills, that’s a kiss.”

“.....”

Add suppressed his head that was starting to ache and delved into his thoughts. Eun couldn’t be joking in this kind of situation, and even if she would, she wouldn’t lie about something this important.

Thus, this was true.

“I’m going to go crazy. You want me to.... So I if I want to go back I have to kiss someone?”

“Of course, you’ll have to find a way to defeat D before that. Oh, by the way. You must have figured this out already but this is to generate a time-space coordinate so candidates are restricted to the El Search Party members. Kissing anyone else is useless.”

“.....”

To think that this kind of thing will happen. While Add was so dumfounded that he couldn’t answer, Eun smiled as if she discovered something amusing.

“Alright, then who will boy choose out of the Search Party? Will it be Elsword after all?”

“.....Foxes should have males and females as well.”

Add unconsciously ended up retorting back. Eun opened her eyes widely as if she was shocked.

“No way, boy is saying he won’t kiss another man?!”

“.....”

It was blatantly obvious that she was pretending to be surprised. While Add kept silent because he was still overwhelmed by all of this.....Eun continued speaking.

“Then boy has no choice but to choose one of the girls from the Search Party. Is this how it feels for an older sister to watch her younger brother become a bride?”

“.....You look like you’re enjoying this a lot.”

“Didn’t I say already? It feels like an older sister watching her younger sister become a groom.”

Isn’t she completely filled with thoughts of messing around? When Add was still at a loss for words, Eun slyly started counting with her fingers.

“So there are basically five candidates? Aisha, Rena, girl, Ara and Elesis. I’ll become an affection point barometer for you. Let me first tell you the current situation of your affection points!”

“.....”

Again, why are you so excited? Eun shrugged then started to ramble on.

“First, Aisha will be difficult. Very difficult. Your affection points are at the very bottom. I’ll cheer boy on of that’s what boy wishes but it won’t be an easy path.”

“.....”

She was forcing stuff that he hadn’t even thought of onto him.

“Next candidate is the beautiful Elf.....but as you already saw, she became like that. She would have been a prime candidate normally but it will be a thorny path now. Of course, fruit obtained after overcoming that thorny path will be extremely sweet. You won’t regret choosing to mingle with her. I’ll cheer you on!”

“.....”

I don’t need this. When Add sighed with a bitter face, Eun shrugged then moved on to the next person.

“Next is Ara. Although her personality changed a bit, Ara is still Ara, she’s innocent and cute so she will be the easiest path. Not only that, but she’s a candidate that I can help you most with. For now, she’s probably the top candidate, a candidate with the highest possibility of success.”

“.....I said I don’t need this.”

“Then next is Elly.”

Add pressed his hand down on his forehead then shook his head. He understood the situation but couldn’t keep up with the conversation.

“She’s a strong and beautiful lady but boy should know very well that isn’t all there is to her. But she’s a trustworthy companion in this universe so you could rest easy and raise her affection points.

Unlike how she is on the outside, she's delicate and soft on the inside so you have a chance if you use this to your advantage. Long as you get the mood right!"

"....."

Seriously, the world must be going crazy. While still bitter, Add was listening to what Eun was saying for now. But Eun stopped talking as if she was finished so Add had to urge her.

"Why did you stop in the middle?"

".....Ah, the girl can't be left out after all?"

Eun spoke with a strange tone then spoke with a lower tone than before.

"Currently, the girl's affection point is the lowest of all. It's regrettable but affection points boy racked up in the original universe is all gone. She's the most difficult candidate so it will be best for you to give up on her."

"Is that so....."

Something felt off but Add nodded then accepted. He was dropped into an unknown universe and had to figure out how to defeat D and a way to go back. But he at least somewhat understood his current situation now.

When Add finished organizing his thoughts, Eun urged him.

"Then whose affection point will boy raise? I'll be able to help more actively if you choose quickly."

"Wait for now. I'll think about it over time."

"It's not something you should be too casual about....."

Eun frowned but closed her mouth. Add slightly made a fist with his hand and opened it back up then dropped a sigh.

".....New universe huh."

Way to defeat D, so there is a clue about this somewhere in here? He couldn't have come here for no reason at all. Add slowly continued his words.

"For now, I'll think about a way to return slowly.... And measure while talking with the other members."

"Well, keep in mind that there isn't a lot of free time. Affection point isn't something that stacks up overnight. It needs focused care. It also could turn into a bloodbath if one two-times. Most important thing after all is managing hunger points delicately and applying good diet continuously."

Add nodded instead of answering.

Different universe. What he should do in this universe with unfamiliar but familiar comrades still wasn't decided in detail.

He needed more time to think this over.

‘.....Kiss.’

Add shook his head after finishing his flashback. In Add's perspective, time traveling or destroying hundreds of demons was much easier.

He knew what the action was but he didn't know how he could go about doing something like that.

.....Was it something people will let you do if you asked?

He knew in his head that there were people that did such things to each other in the world, but he didn't know what they were thinking as they did such things.

“Should I ask for advice.....?”

Asking the girls about it was an incredibly stupid thing to do, then that leaves the guys..... Maybe Raven who looked like he had lots of life experience might know something? Add was groaning when someone suddenly spoke from beside him.

“Is there something wrong, Mr.Add?”

Ara was beside him before he realized she was there and she was staring straightly at him. It was a familiar face but her eyes felt unusual.

“What do you mean?”

“You've been looking strange since before. Is there something you're worried about?”

“.....”

He probably shouldn't confess that..... I have to kiss someone from the El Search Party to go back to my original universe but I have no idea what to do. Also, she wouldn't even understand anyways.

“It's nothing.....”

“Alright, but feel free to tell me about it if you have any worries.”

Ara answered calmly to Add's disheartened voice then walked back to the front again. She did seem more composed than Ara that Add knew.

Rena who was in the front realized Ara had broken formation without any notice so she warned sternly.

“Ara, don’t break formation. There might be enemies.”

“Yes, I’m sorry.”

“.....”

Rena had completely changed as well.

If it was Rena that Add knew..... maybe he could have confessed this situation to her and asked for advice. She would have at least been a better person to consult this with than that mischievous Eun.

But it felt like he would only get yelled at for spouting nonsense if he asked this Rena. She totally wasn’t someone fit to consult this with.

“.....I don’t know. I don’t know at all.”

The homework he needed to finish in order to return to his original universe, kissing with someone from the El Search Party. But it became more troublesome more he thought about it. He almost felt like not thinking about it at all but that will become even more troublesome later on.

He didn’t intend to live here forever. He had to return right away when he finds out how to defeat D. Eun’s suggestion about needing to raise affection points beforehand for that purpose was correct.

He knew. But.....

Add was moving his steps blindly from having his head filled with troubles when the El Search Party stopped their march. Add hadn’t realized because he wasn’t looking around but they had arrived at the center of Ash Covered Village.

But there was no one to be seen. Rena looked around then sighed.

“Seriously, Elesis..... I told her to wait quietly.”

“Something could have happened so let’s split up and look for her.”

Rena nodded to Raven’s suggestion then looked around at the members.

“Let’s search in teams of two. Teams will be Raven and Ara, Chung and Aisha, Elsword and me, Eve and Add.”

“Ah, wait.”

Add quickly raised his hand.

“My Dynamos are in repairs so I don’t have any combat capability right now. I’d appreciate it if you changed my teammate.”

“.....”

Eve glared at Add ever so coldly.

“Does that mean you can’t trust my abilities? It’s more than enough to protect a useless person like you.”

He didn’t know how to deal with ‘this Eve’(He didn’t know what else to call her. She was Eve after all.) so he was just trying avoid being together with her if possible. His head was so cluttered right now from having to deal with affection points and figuring out how to defeat D that he didn’t want any more things to worry about. Add forged up any words he could in response to Eve’s furious response.

“But I won’t be able to help you if you’re in danger. I don’t want to endanger you in case of some unexpected situation.”

“.....”

Eve stared at Add straightly for a moment then turned her head away. Quite an angry response, Add would have normally cared more about this kind of reaction from Eve, but he didn’t have any idea how to handle Eve from this universe right now.

Elsword stepped up when the atmosphere became strange.

“Then want me to come with you Big Brother?”

Add nodded when Elsword smiled as he put his hand on top of Add’s shoulder. One who showed almost no change from the El Search Party that Add knew was Elsword.

Ironically, Elsword was the one most familiar to him right now. To think a day when he was most comfortable with Elsword would come.....

Add was brooding over this fact when Rena raised her voice.

“Then let’s search around the village for about 1 hour. Contact everyone right away if there’s something wrong or if you find Elesis.”

Other members answered then scattered to various places. Add let out an exhausted sigh. His mind was tired even though he hadn’t been overusing his dynamos.

When the other members were far away, Elsword took a glance at Add.

“Why is Eve acting like that all of a sudden?”

“.....What do you mean?”

“Eve was angry. Did you do something strange again?”

“I didn’t do any.....”

....thing. Add was about to say this but froze. He was so surprised by the issue of alternate universe and alternate party members that he hadn’t been thinking properly. There was something that he missed.

Judging by how the El Search Party was acting, Add was one of their members as well. But Add they knew wasn’t Add(Time Tracer) that was here right now.

“W, wait....”

Add covered his mouth with his hand then busily calculated inside his head. Elsword tilted his head in confusion but Add quickly pointed at the far away horizon with his finger.

“Elsword, go run there and come back. I have something I want to think about by myself.”

“.....Big Brother, you said your Dynamos were broken. What are you going to do if demons ambush you?”

Elsword asked worriedly but Add didn’t listen and turned around.

“Let me think by myself.”

Add said this then quickly entered the house he saw in front of him. He heard footsteps following him but they didn’t continue all the way inside the building. Elsword must have somewhat got a grasp that Add was in turmoil and was going to wait outside the building.

But being impressed by Elsword’s thoughtfulness could come later. Add quickly ran up the stairs and headed to the 2nd floor. He was the only one in this house, but you never knew.

It would be troublesome if someone overheard what he was going to talk about from now on.

Empty house, Add sat on the 2nd floor’s bed then took out Eun from inside his jacket. Eun who had been dozing off yawned and stretched her arms when Add poked her cheek to wake her up.

“Yawn, I’m quite tired. Why are you waking me up?”

“.....You said what we did was universe travel. Place where I’ve never been before, that it’s a given that everything had changed.”

Eun nodded to Add’s reconfirmation.

“But people here are considering me as.....obvious.”

Elsword, Aisha, Rena, Rave, Eve, Chung and Ara..... They had different images than the El Search Party that Add knew but the fact that they were all trying to stop the demons together was the same.

For Elesis, he'll have to meet her first to be certain.....

“So that means before I arrived..... There was a guy called Add here right? Where did he go?”

“Hmmm....”

Eun dragged her words then made a strange smile.

“So you’re worried if Add who was here in this universe might have died? Boy has become too soft. Boy from before would have clearly said it doesn’t matter if someone like that died or not long as he achieved his goals.”

“.....Just answer my question.”

Eun’s indication was spot on but Add ignored it.

Although it wasn’t intentional, could it be that what he did to escape from D destroy the other Add(should he say himself)?

“I’ll explain it in a way that’s easy to understand.”

When Eun waved her hand, a big wooden table appeared before her. Add stared curiously at the wooden table wondering what this square table with lattice lines drawn on it was when Eun put a black stone and a white stone on top of the lattices.

“Let’s say this white stone is boy, and this black stone is boy who was in this universe.”

Eun said this as she put the tips of her index finger and thumb together then flicked the white stone. White stone went flying to hit the black stone then the black stone went flying outside the wooden table.

“This is what happened.”

“.....The shock from me moving here made Add from this universe fly off?”

“Universe travel isn’t an easy feat. Boy also always time traveled but never even thought about traveling across universes right?”

Add nodded quietly. His topic of research was time travel so he hadn’t been too interested in alternate universes.

Although he did know about them academically.

“I know about parallel universe theory at least. It’s something about an alternate world where someone like me exists.”

“Time travel of course requires appropriate cost but universe travel requires even more. Normal universes don’t easily accept the existence of same individuals. I did hear about there being universes where multiple same individuals can exist together.....but this isn’t the case for universe we were in and this universe.”

“It’s confusing so let’s call where I was universe A, and this place universe B.”

Eun smiled slyly when Add pointed this out.

“Wasn’t this a timing where you got angry that I’m messing around and dragging the story on for too long?”

“I’m interested in the topic itself.”

Add had insisted on time traveling so far but universe traveling was quite an unconventional and fresh concept.

Add thought over the events that happened since he arrived in universe B then asked about the most important thing first.

“Then what happened to Add B who got thrown off?”

“Theoretically, he will return back to this place if boy returns to universe A. He will return just as much as he got thrown off. Although their extents are different, it seems all universes have a property of trying to restore themselves.”

“.....So he isn’t dead.”

Although the story was complicated, he understood in a general sense. Add nodded then confirmed once more.

“So D is trying to rule over time and space in the universe A that I was in, but this universe B doesn’t have anything to do with him, so that’s why D cannot do anything about this place. Also, because I arrived here, Add B who was originally in this universe B got flown off somewhere else. Am I right?”

“Amount of stones one can place on the go table is limited. No matter how good of a go player one is, they cannot place any more stones once all spaces have been filled.”

“.....”

While Add was deep in his thoughts, the wooden table was already filled up with white and black stones. Eun gave a cold smile when Add looked down at the wooden table that was completely filled up.

“If one has to force another stone on this go table.....they would have to take a stone off.”

“I don’t know what go is, but I understand what you mean. So.....universe travel isn’t something that can be done normally, same individual from universe A and universe B cannot exist at the same time so the guy who was already here had to get thrown off.....”

Add’s face as he reviewed the facts became cold.

“Then how can D and I exist at the same time?”

“.....”

According to Eun’s words, D and Add couldn’t exist at the same time. Add questioned sharply.

“You said there were universes where same individuals could exist, but that wasn’t the case for the universe we were in. But D and I existed at the same time. How is that possible?”

That’s right, D’s existence itself was denying what Eun was saying right now. Eun let out a bitter smile.

“Boy’s brain works really fast after all. You’re trying to make me explain while discretely extracting the information you want. It’s almost to the point where I’m marvelled.”

“We had to go over this eventually. If you also have the same desire of wanting to dispose of D.....then answer me honestly.”

Saying dispose of D was bit reluctant. Add sensed ever since he laid his eyes on D that he was Add from the future.

One couldn’t easily say that they’ll dispose of their own future.

“The principle is simple.”

Eun said this then placed a white stone on top of another white stone that was already placed on the table. Then she opened up her arms as if to say ‘didn’t I explain it well?’

“.....You call that an explanation?”

“Ah, boy doesn’t know about go? You must have realized from my explanation just now, but placing a stone on top of one that already exists is cheating. It’s a loss by disqualification.”

“D’s breaking the rules?”

“That’s right, he’s an existence that’s alive only because he’s breaking the rules of space-time and universes. The description devil couldn’t be ever more fitting.”

Eun as she said this looked sorrowful for some reason. Add paused for a bit at how she looked gloomy but pressed his next question quickly after.

“Why go so far to that extent? Just what is D trying to do?”

“According to what he’s saying, his goal is to rule over time and space. Become the king of time and space. Boy should know that the world is created from intersection of time and space right?”

Add obviously knew because he overused time travel.

“D was successful in taking control of time. But Aisha was occupying space. To be more precise, Aisha had to interfere with space in order to stop D from taking complete control over both time and space.”

Add asked with a hope after recalling the conversation between D and Aisha.

“Does that mean Aisha can stop D?”

“That’s obviously impossible. She said it herself that her chances of victory were around 40%. So her actual chances are below 30%, and her chances won’t even be 10% in the fight we last saw. She basically walked into the enemy base after all.”

“Then....”

“Aisha had been facing D by herself and maintaining a deadlock. Of course, she knew that she had no chances in a straight up battle so she had been avoiding direct confrontation. But she was indirectly impeding D’s efforts. Demons were afraid of her, calling her Dimension Princess.”

Add started to get an understanding of what was going on behind the scenes. Eun spoke when Add remained silent.

“While boy was failing countless times, she was stopping D from completely taking control over time and space solely on her own. Be sure to thank her if you see her again later.”

“.....”

It meant that saucy purple magician was keeping D in check by herself. Add gulped then trailed his words.

“But....”

“Yes, she broke her policy and faced D directly for our sake. Although she won’t go down easily....”

It was uncommon for Eun to trail her words so this wasn’t a good sign at all. D will soon defeat even Aisha and take control of space was well.

The phase giving wings to a tiger wasn’t enough. The one who manipulated time and space as they wished, what else would you call that but a god?

Devil was trying to become a god.

“.....My future self will try to take control over time and space?”

“Alright, it looks like what I have to say is roughly over. It would be better for you to hear the rest from D himself.”

It felt like Eun was trying to finish the conversation hastily but Add didn’t say anything.

He didn’t know how he in the future turned out like that, what event he had to go through to turn into that, but it was something he had to confirm for himself.

Just when Add made up his mind and was about to stand up,

Boom!!

There was an explosion and Add’s body went flying.

I could have defended properly if my Dynamos were normal. Add muttered this then coughed after hitting his back hard on the wall. His head hurt and his eyes were dizzy but judging from there being no other pains, he didn’t receive any significant injuries.

There were dust clouds everywhere.

“Cough, cough, what the.....”

Add looked forwards as he coughed then couldn’t continue his words. There was a cold wind blowing from the direction where the wall had been.

The wall got blown off completely. Almost as if someone had struck it strongly from outside.

“What.....”

Add was about to get up quickly but winced from the strange weight he felt on top of him. He hadn’t realized because the situation was too chaotic but there was a strange sensation pressing down on him.

“Cough, cough, hello Add.”

“.....”

Red haired girl who came in breaking through the wall and made Add go flying grinned. For some reason, they ended up in a position where she was sitting on top of collapsed Add as she looked down on him.

Their position in itself was awkward....but he didn't know why she was wearing such an outfit to add to that awkwardness. Add's jaws dropped from seeing the bunny girl outfit with an impressionable red color. She was certainly carrying a sword in her hands, but she was wearing a bunny girl outfit. Bunny ears waving on top of her hair band was a proof to this.

“.....Just what's with that getup?”

“Ah, I tried changing because I got bored while waiting alone. Big Sister Rena didn't want to wear it though.”

I think it would be stranger to want to wear it. Noticing that Add was just staring blankly, the girl asked a bit hesitantly.

“.....It doesn't look good on me after all?”

“I don't think this is the time to be having an idle talk like this.”

When Add spoke sharply, the girl nodded then got up immediately. Then she thanked as if she had almost forgotten.

“Thank you for catching me with your body. I might have gotten hurt if you weren't there.”

“.....I didn't catch you. You just came in and crushed me.”

Even while Add answered, he wasn't able to get rid of his cautiousness.

There was a strange elegance, outgoing character and maturity coming off from this girl who was standing straightly in a room filled with dust clouds.

Her red hair fit well with her cheerful attitude. Although she was a bunny girl.

She was a girl who'd attract attention even in the middle of ceaselessly changing battlefield.
.....Although it was strange to give this kind of evaluation to a bunny girl.

“.....Elesis.”

Elesis was hitting the dust off her shoulders but turned around from having her name called.

“Ah, did you get hurt somewhere? Want me to spit on your wound?”

“....”

Elesis that Add knew was a terrifying foe, powerful enemy that he couldn't surpass even though he fought turning back time multiple times. But she must be different in this universe.

Although they had same names and appearance, they were completely different individuals. Overlapping the appearance of Elesis that Add knew on top of this one was pointless.

.....He knew that in his head, but he still couldn't help but to be restless. Seeing that Add was sending a gaze of caution towards her, Elesis tilted her head then stretched out her hand to forcefully raise Add up. He didn't even have any time to resist.

Although Add was bit skinny, he was still a tall person. But Elesis handled him easily as if she was handling an accessory in her hand.

“Are you angry? I’m sorry.”

Elesis gave a light but serious apology then started to hit the dust off Add’s jacket.

It seemed she was about to hit the dust off his pants too if he left her alone so Add refused with a hand gesture then backed out.

“Everyone is looking for you. Why are you troubling everyone?”

“Ah, that’s.....”

Elesis was about to explain but then twirled around to swing her sword. A giant fist that was flying in aiming toward Elesis got blocked by her sword.

Attacker laughed gladly.

“Hmm? So you’re not a normal bunny girl after all.”

“I was just wearing this because I was bored. I have spares if you like this outfit. Want to try them on?”

“That sounds great. Have them prepared after the entertainment.”

Small girl wearing giant gauntlets stared at Elesis haughtily. Judging by the circumstances, this girl must have made Elesis come flying this way.

Blue-white girl smiled as she waved her hand towards Elesis.

“This is an entertainment beyond my expectation. Try coming at me more seriously.”

“Right back at you. You’re beyond my expectation as well. Although you’re still below Scar.”

“That displeases me because I cannot deny it. It’s true that I lost a lot of my power.....”

Girl looked dissatisfied but acknowledged. Although two of them were fighting, there was a strangely peaceful atmosphere between them.

Add had never seen this blue-white girl before but those were certainly horns on her head. He could tell from a single glance that she wasn’t a human.

“.....A demon?”

“Address me as Lu, human. What is your name?”

Add was about to answer when Elesis swung her sword lightly. Wind blew across the room and dust that had settled rose up again violently.

“I’m sorry Lu, but two of our business isn’t over yet. Let’s save the introductions for later and fight a bit longer.”

“Yes, good. Keep up with me until I’m satisfied.”

Lu clenched her fists as she smiled and Elesis smiled back as she held up her sword. And Add who was watching.....realized his life was in danger if he didn’t escape from this place quickly.

The village was getting destroyed.

Sword and fist targeted each other as red bunny girl and blue demon jumped from building to building. Shockwave that was caused each time two of their weapons clashed and struck each other annihilated the foundations and pillars of the old village’s buildings.

El Search Party all gathered from hearing this ruckus and blankly stared at this scene. Elesis and a girl they had never seen were fighting intensely.

“Who is that?”

“She looks like a demon. Shall I join in Ms.Rena?”

When Ara asked worriedly, Rena frowned and thought without answering. Raven answered instead.

“This looks strange for fight with a demon.”

“It’s almost as if they are sparring.”

Just like Elsword said, battle between Elesis and Lu was fierce but there was no killing intent.

“To fight evenly against Ms.Elesis. That’s amazing.”

“It’s not the time to be impressed, Ara.”

Add who had barely escaped from the collapsing building and was panting joined in on the conversation.

“She did seem like a reasonable demon. She said her name was Lu.”

“Rather than just standing there, have a seat everyone.”

El Search Party all looked back from the voice that came from behind them. They didn't know since when but there were table, chairs, drinks and cookies set up behind them. You could tell the table was carefully prepared to cater to just enough number of people.

Add felt dumfounded from seeing the El Search Party slowly walk towards the table to sit. He had to point this out.

“Just what are you all thinking by sitting there?”

“Hmm?”

Rena who was already seated and stretching her hand towards the teacup looked back at Add with a slightly confused tone. Elsword and Ara were already eating the cookies.

Add was embarrassed to call them his comrades right now. Add covered his face with his palm from this scene then pointed beside him with his other hand. The group turned their heads to see a man who was wearing a suit standing there and watching Elesis and Lu's battle.

Man who invited them to sit finally turned around when everyone's gazes gathered on him then slightly nodded to greet everyone politely.

“I'm Ciel. Lu's partner. How do you like the cookies? How about the tea?”

“It was great!”

Ciel's expression turned blank after seeing Ara empty her tea in one shot then put down her teacup. Ara became confused from Ciel's gaze and asked.

“U, um was I not supposed to drink it?”

“.....No, I'll bring you some more if you want.”

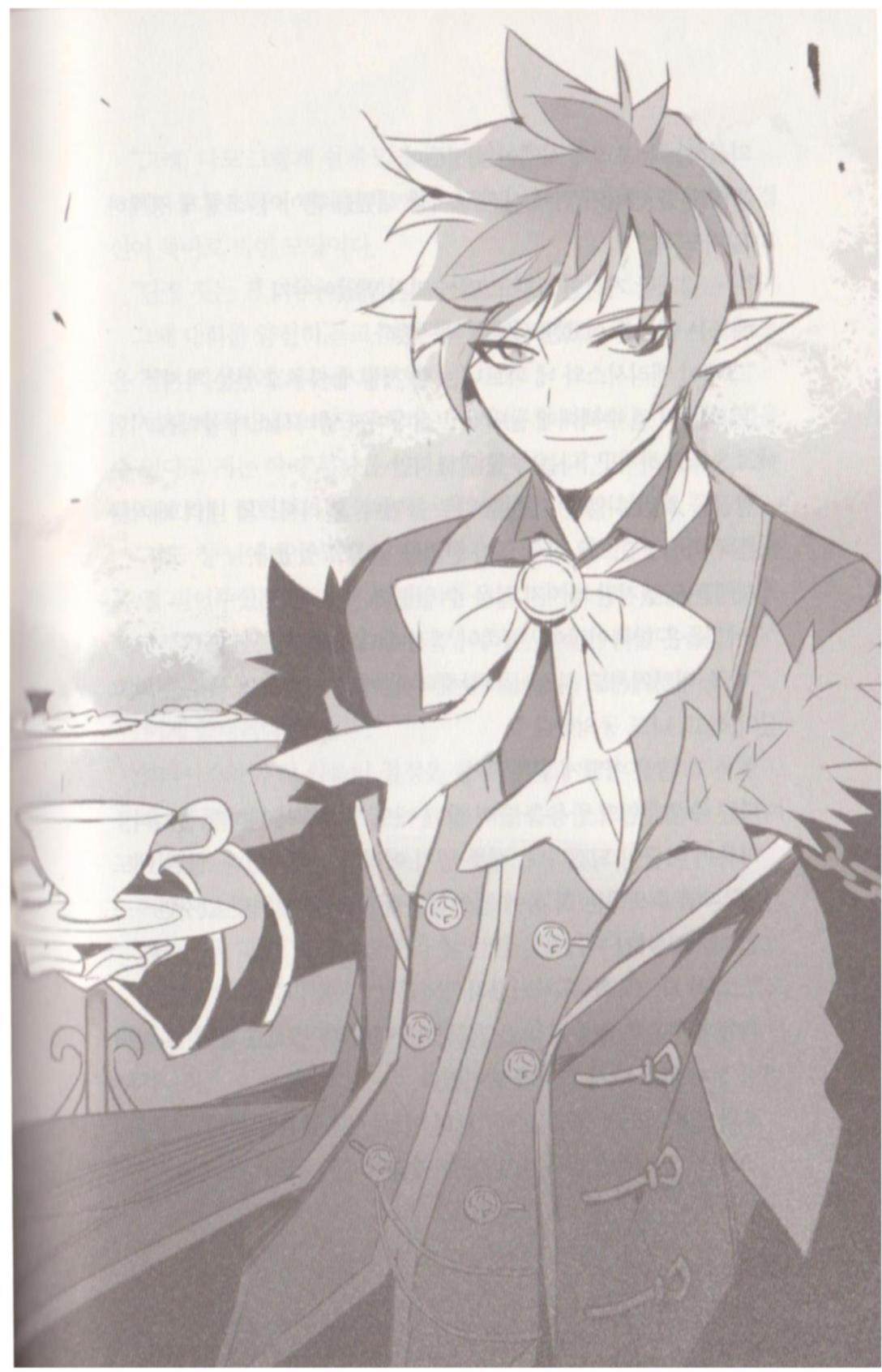
When Ciel said this and stretched out his hand, space opened up and a bag of tea leaves popped out. Add's eyes opened widely in shock from seeing this.

Wasn't that a dimension gate? And he's using it for merely taking out tea leaves?

Of course, even Eve could use dimension gates and Add could use it as well if he needed to. But using a dimension gate required quite a complicated calculation process.....so it was normal to use them only for battle and only in a limited way.

Storing minor objects inside then calling them out whenever he needed them was a proof that he either had enough knowledge and calculative brain to handle dimension equation freely or had a power to dominate space around him.

“That's amazing.....”



Aisha who was intently staring at the flower pattern on the table saw what Ciel did and exclaimed. But Ciel didn't mind Aisha's reaction and handed another filled teacup to Ara.

“Thank you very much.”

“Drink a bit slowly....”

Ciel tried to stop Ara but she had already gulped down her tea in one go. As Ciel made a very depressed expression, Raven asked quietly.

“I'd like to hear what's going on, Ciel.”

“Ah, so you're Raven.”

Ciel gave gaze to Raven's Nasod arm then spoke as if he recognised Raven. Soon as Ciel said this, sense of caution finally started to dwell amongst the El Search Party.

Responding to all the suspicious gazes, Ciel explained himself.

“I only researched about all of you before meeting everyone in person. You don't have to be so cautious.”

“....You guys shouldn't have eaten so readily if you were going to get cautious now.”

Add muttered then sighed. He then questioned Ciel.

“So why are Elesis and your partner fighting like that?”

“When we said we wanted to join the El Search Party, Elesis told us that she wanted to test our strength. I tried to stop Lu. But....”

Ciel trailed his words then turned his gaze up. Lu had blocked Elesis' downward smash with her right magical gauntlet and was now launching a counter attack.

Add understood the situation but had to point something out.

“But you are demons. Demons want to join the El Search Party?”

“Inner circumstances amongst demons are complicated as well. Lu wants to stop the demons' rampage and I agree with her.”

“....How are we supposed to trust your words?”

Add slightly examined the other Search Party members' reactions then asked roughly on purpose.

Demons want to become their allies? It was kind of an unbelievable story. Of course, there were multiple members from the El Search Party that Add knew who had their relatives on the demons' side, but this and that were bit different.

“That’s probably the reason for this test.”

Ciel said this then sighed as he waved his hand. Then more cookies fell on top of Elsword’s empty plate.

Eve who had been looking at Lu and Elesis’ battle spoke sharply.

“I know what you mean but I cannot trust demons.”

“Yes, I also can’t trust them so easily.”

Rena also agreed and kept her caution. They must have their wits together a bit more than the El Search Party that Add knew.

“Wouldn’t it be too hasty for us to decide right away?”

In that moment, Chung who was listening to the conversation opened his mouth. After gathering everyone’s gazes, Chung maturely stated his opinion.

“You can’t always hate everything that has to do with demons, people might have their circumstances. This is what I learned from meeting Big Sister Ara. Not only that, but someone who’s equally skilled as Big Sister Elesis is saying she’ll help us, I don’t think there’s a reason for us to refuse.”

“I also agree with Mr.Chung. I know it’s obvious to be suspicious.....but all of you trusted me right? So how about we trust Ms.Lu and Mr.Ciel as well?”

Eve and Rena seemed to think carefully once more when even Ara joined in and agreed with Chung. Just as the atmosphere started to change towards ‘let’s think about it for now’, Elsword opened his mouth.

“Looks like it’s almost over.”

Elesis and Lu’s fight was rushing towards the end. Elesis and Lu each landed on top of a rooftop and were staring and smiling at each other while panting heavily.

Elesis twirled her giant sword once then shouted with a refreshing voice.

“This is great, Lu. It’s totally a skill worthy of Lord of the Demon Realm. You’ve impressed me!”

“You as well, the title of strongest Red Knights captain is ever more fitting. I was quite impressed as well. You’re indeed a skilled individual worthy of being called the hope of Elrios that’s on its path to ruin.”

“That’s an excessive compliment.”

Elesis grinned as she aimed her sword at Lu.

“I know we should end it about here.....but I can’t seem to cool down now. So why don’t we settle this right here?”

“Good, I’ll allow it!”

Lu who was drunk with excitement nodded then kicked the roof. Magic circle that formed below her feet launched her like a bullet. Roof tiles all got flipped over and fell to the ground after getting caught up by the force of Lu’s charge.

It was a charge with overwhelming force enough to destroy the building she used as a foothold, and there was also the mighty power contained in her giant gauntlet!

“Haaaah!!”

Elesis smiled joyfully as she spun around with her sword despite the terrifying charge that she definitely won’t escape unscathed if she was hit in front of her.

Strike back against powerful enemy with even more power. That’s the principle of the red knights, no, principle of Elesis!

“Juggernaut.....!”

Lu who was charging in with a mighty force and Elesis who was spinning and attempting to strike back head on, it was a situation where one of them could get critically injured.

El Search Party all got startled and got up instantly but it was already too late to stop them!

“Buster!!”

Two of their final attacks crossed. But unexpectedly, there were no noises or shocks.

Elesis had stopped spinning and was lowering her sword, and Lu was also standing tall and panting heavily. Both of them were standing still and weren’t moving.

“.....Who won?”

At Elsword’s careful question, Ciel answered sharply.

“The fight wasn’t settled.”

“.....Everyone, get ready for battle!”

Everyone looked at Raven confusedly when he shouted while taking out his blade. Could it be that they were going to consider Lu and Ciel as their enemies? But Rena and Ara must have sensed something as well because their expressions stiffened as they got ready to fight.

Space got distorted all around them.



Elesis and Lu that were proudly standing beside each other on the rooftop made tired sighs then looked back towards each other.

“Why did you miss on purpose?”

“You’re the one who slashed the wrong place.”

Answer to their questions presented themselves right away. Space beside Elesis seemed to crack then an Incubus fell down. Space where Lu’s fist hit also cracked and a Succubus fell down.

They had read the enemies coming in through the dimension gates and had changed the target of their attacks. Lu clicked her tongue dismally at the sounds of demons falling.

“That Karis is using such a boring move. Ruining my entertainment like this.....”

“Shall we end the initiation test here?”

When Elesis asked while smiling, Lu also quickly loosened her expression and nodded. Their fun was interrupted during the best moment.....but one to take their frustration out on wasn’t the person standing beside them.

Enemies were coming in through the dimension gate. Demons numbering roughly over hundred were circling all around them and threatening them.

But Elesis and Lu didn’t mind the demons and smiled.

“Then let’s clean them up.”

“That’s what I wished to do as well!”

Strongest Red Knights captain and the demon empress now turned their weapons towards their enemies.

Demons were attacking through the dimension gates.

“.....This scene doesn’t change even in another universe.”

Add shook his head bitterly then manipulated his Dynamos to send an electric current. Number of functional Dynamos right now was three, big skills like Viod Field or Star Dust Shower couldn’t be used, but he could fire smaller skills like shockwaves or Void Impact.

Add was glad that he set the Dynamos so they could be series activated with only 3 just in case. Add easily disposed of an Incubus jumping at him then took a look around at the battlefield.

Rena was mixing sword and bow to perform outstandingly both in the front and back lines. Elsword and Ara were still in charge of the frontlines and Raven was also performing excellently at the front.

Chung was destroying the enemies by swinging his Destroyer and Aisha was summoning lightning and ice storms to support everyone.

Add looked to see how Ciel who he had no information on was fighting. Ciel was dispatching the demons with a weapon that looked like a gun.

“.....There’s nothing for me to do.”

11 allies, it was almost 2 times more than the El Search Party that Add was in. Not only the numbers, but each of their skills was extraordinary.

Add observed relaxingly from the back and thought. According to Eun, this universe travel was planned beforehand. There must be some meaning to it. Of course, it was to escape from D’s grasp but that shouldn’t be everything.

Just like Eun said, you had to say there was a clue to defeating D in this universe.

“Just what is that.....?”

Was it going back to the original universe with this powerful El Search Party? But movement of a same entity will throw off the inhabitant of the original universe. Add B who should have been here got thrown off after all.

Add sighed while looking at a succubus falling down after being hit by Rena’s arrow. This El Search Party was indeed really powerful.....but they won’t be of help in defeating D. Not only will it be difficult to universe travel with all of them, but doing such a thing will make his original comrades fly off into some unknown universe.

It will be like burning one’s entire house down just to get rid of some pests.

Bam!

Add snapped out of his thoughts due to the sound of an impact that came from behind his back and looked back. Nasod he saw before, Oberon was slowly withdrawing his tonfa. Incubus was slowly falling to the ground, it must have been aiming for Add’s back while he was deep in thought.

“What are you doing meditating when everyone is fighting? You’re not only useless but also lack sincerity.”

“.....Then how about you?”

Eve who was scolding Add was sitting pompously on her gears. It was totally not an attitude to show in a battlefield.

“I’m fighting. Ophelia!”

Ophelia who was summoned by Eve's order sent off an electric current to electrocute a Succubus that was flying in the air. Then Oberon charged forwards to initiate attack on demons in the front.

Eve didn't even move a finger even though her servants were busily fighting.

You could feel composure and majesty from how she only commanded others even in the battlefield.

"And I'm also useful. There, try to say something to refute."

Add strangely felt disheartened when this Eve snapped aggressively at him. She was Eve, but she wasn't, but you couldn't help but to call her Eve.

His conclusion was that he still didn't know how to deal with her.

Add's mind was still not settled yet so he didn't know why Eve was acting so aggressively towards him.

"What do you want from me? Want me to thank you for saving me?"

It unintentionally became a sarcastic tone. Eve must have been slightly offended because she frowned then told Add severely.

"Express your respect towards technology of the Nasod civilization."

"What?"

"Aren't I protecting you who is useless? You don't have to thank me but I'd like your re-evaluation about the Nasod technology."

Eve requested in a quite emotional tone. Add had experience with talking with Eve from before.....and according to those experiences, it seemed like she was acting like this because of some pent up emotion from events that happened before.

The problem was that he didn't even have a clue as to what those events were. He didn't get why she was treating him like this.

".....Ah, of course."

The person this Eve was getting angry at was Add B who was supposed to be here. It was obvious that Add who arrived here from universe travel wouldn't know. One who invited Eve to his house, one who offended Eve all this time was Add B.

"....Just what did he do?"

Add B(should he say himself? Let's not because it feels repulsive) must have done various things to offend Eve up till now.

Eun's word that Eve's affection points were at the very bottom wasn't an exaggeration.

“I’m sorry. It seems I must have done lots of things to offend you.... I’ll apologize. I’ll watch out from now on.”

Let’s apologize first. Add apologized just like how he was taught from Ara. Eve looked quite surprised.

Eve who was frozen for a while from surprise turned her head away abruptly.

“It’s fine long as you realized your mistakes.”

“Also, thank you for protecting me.”

Since he apologized anyways, he also thanked Eve for what happened as well.

Eve had known that Add was currently injured and his battle capabilities had dropped due to broken Dynamos so she had protected him. It would have been dangerous if Eve hadn’t been considerate.

Eve must have gotten even more startled from Add’s honest expression of gratitude that she couldn’t answer right away. She replied slowly after a bit.

“.....Even though you’re useless, you’re still our comrade. Of course I’ll protect you.”

“I see.”

Although she was a bit sassier, she was Eve after all. She’ll accept if you apologize and thank her honestly.

Add nodded as he sighed. Ara and Rena’s images had changed quite a bit as well but they also shouldn’t be too different if you talked to them honestly.

“You’re.....bit strange today, Add.”

“That’s how I feel like today.”

Add answered appropriately then looked straightly at Eve. He had a momentary impulse of wanting to touch her face but restrained himself.

Add left behind Eve he knew to be killed by D. Recalling her last appearance as she looked back towards him made his blood rush. It was so frustrating and painful that he was filled with desire to go back right now to fight again.

But he couldn’t. Everyone gave their lives to give him a chance. He absolutely couldn’t fail.

He must find a clue to defeating D before going back.

“Add?”

“.....”

But..... he was already stretching out his hand to stroke Eve's face.

This Eve wasn't Eve that he knew and doing this wouldn't convey anything.

Nothing will change by doing this.

But because he knew that although very little, there was a worry hidden inside this voice calling his name, inside her expressionless face..... He wanted a slight moment of consolation.

“.....You're not hitting me saying that I'm rude.”

“.....”

Eve who had been sitting blankly became startled a bit later. But Add had already suppressed his lingering attachments and withdrawn his hand.

He turned his back towards Eve.

“Sorry, I'll explain later. Although I won't be able to tell you everything.....”

That's right, this Eve doesn't know anything. She must have fought together with her comrades in this universe without D. Stretching out his hand to touch her right now was just Add's foolish and silly impulse.

Although touching her wouldn't be able to erase the guilt of leaving her behind.

Although the fact that it was him from the future that had been endlessly destroying Eve wouldn't disappear.

Although he knew very well that the girl in front of him wasn't the girl that he knew. Even if they looked ever so similar they weren't the same.

Still, knowing that there was a world where she was safe..... made him happy.

“.....I'll dispose of him for sure.”

Girl that Add knew could also be liberated from her long suffering once he gets rid of D. Add resolved himself then started to move his steps.

The battle wasn't over yet.



Still, knowing that there was a world where she could be safe.....
made him happy.

Demons were like leaves before the storm from the El Search Party's attacks. El Search Party members each caught their breaths and examined the condition of their comrades after defeating over 100 of Incubus and Succubus in less than 10 minutes.

After confirming no one was injured, Elesis leaned her sword on her shoulder then murmured.

“But these don’t look like Scar’s minions.”

“They are servants of Karis. Those two must have joined forces.”

Lu’s words gathered everyone’s eyes on her. Ara’s expression turned stiff.

“Karis? She’s here?”

“Do you know who that is Big Sister Ara?”

“She’s a demon who contributed to the great disaster in Velder. I’ve fought her before, she an extremely powerful demon.”

Ara was explaining tensely when a voice came from nowhere.

“Ahahaha..... hecklers.”

El Search Party all turned their heads towards where the seductive voice came from. Dark hole that looked similar to a dimension gate started to open then a waving dark smoke gathered in one place to turn into a beautiful woman with red hair.

She wore a seductive outfit as if to show off her voluptuous body but you could tell from a single glance that there was an evil aura about her.

“This is my first time meeting you all, El Search Party.”

Person in question also wasn’t intending to hide her personality because she was making a sinister smile while licking her lips. In that moment, Elesis dashed in like a gale and swung her sword.

Her foot left the ground soon as ‘first’ was said then her sword had already struck Karis’ neck at ‘El’.

It was such a swift movement that Add felt the pressure from facing Elesis as an enemy again.

But the sword she swung just pressed deep into Karis’ neck then bounced off. It was as if she struck a bouncy chunk of rubber. Elesis wasn’t surprised in the slightest and was about to strike again but Lu dissuaded her.

“Stop, there is a mass but she hasn’t actually appeared in this place so it’s no use.”

Lu glared coldly at Karis after stopping Elesis.

“How shameless of you to show your face in front of me, Karis.”

“Lu, stay calm.”

Despite what Ciel was saying, he was also glaring at Karis with an expression that had a fair amount of emotions mixed into it.

You could tell instantly that these two had an ill-fated relationship with Karis.

“Hoho, it’s been a while Lord Luciela. It seems you’re actually managing to stay alive while crawling around on the ground. I’ll go and squash you out of your misery soon.”

Karis bowed to Lu while letting off a sinister smile. Although her words were polite her hostile intents were conveyed clearly.

“Hmph, you’re the one who should be crying and begging for mercy right now. Begging me to spare your life should be the only thing you can do right now. Of course, it’s not like I’ll spare you even if you beg.”

“What can you do with that smaller body and weakened power? I was planning to kill you painlessly for old times’ sake.....but it looks like you’ll need some punishment. I’ll make you beg me to kill you-..... what the heck are you doing?”

Karis who was boasting in front of Lu snapped in frustration with a sharp voice after seeing Elesis’ hand get waved in front of her eyes.

After the sword strike didn’t work, Elesis was now experimenting with various things like punching Karis’ face, touching her horns and stretching out her cheek.

Although Karis’ form that appeared right now had a mass, it was only a dummy. It was only projecting Karis’ image so they could converse.

There wasn’t any damage to Karis’ actual body no matter what Elesis did. Still, here Karis was setting the mood to have a serious talk with her old master. But some red haired human girl was making fun of her.

Elesis didn’t listen and repeatedly poked around at Karis’ cheek then pressed on her chest next.

“Can’t you see that we’re talking? Get lost, human!”

“Wait a bit.”

Elesis ignored Karis’ protest then continued to touch various places on the dummy. It totally ruined the atmosphere Karis was setting up for her talk with Lu.

Not only that, but Lu was now biting down on a lollipop that Ciel gave her because the conversation was broken. Mood for a serious conversation was already long gone.

“.....You’ll regret it forever if you don’t back out right now, human.”

Of course, even though Karis said this she didn’t actually have any ways to attack Elesis. Just like how the El Search Party couldn’t do any harm to Karis, Karis also couldn’t affect the El Search Party in any way either.

Karis patiently suppressed her rage and waited for Elesis to get bored. With Karis’ personality, she’d normally get enraged and try to kill everyone but that was impossible right now, and Elesis wasn’t listening to anything she said.

It was probably better to be patient and find a moment to resume the conversation.

“Hmm.....”

Elesis nodded as if she understood then finally took her hands off Karis and backed out. Karis who was getting continuously bothered up till now made some fake coughs then tried to resume the conversation. But Elesis wasn’t finished yet.

“Wait a moment, Big Brother Raven, Big Sister Rena. Can you two come here for a second?”

When two of them approached confusedly, Elesis made Raven stand in front of Karis.

“Can you take off your top for a bit?”

“.....Alright.”

Even while puzzled, Raven thought that Elesis had something in mind so he took off his top clothing. Robustly built man’s chest appeared in front of Karis who was just trying to resume her conversation with Lu.

After getting suddenly intervened again, Karis suppressed her boiling rage and repeated ‘patient, be patient’ in her mind.

She had been trying to send her minions to set up the atmosphere then ridicule Lu. How did things go so wrong? But backing out after coming this far would also be laughable so she had no choice but to be patient.

When Raven took off his top clothing in front of Karis, Elesis declared strongly.

“Just as I thought! Big Brother Raven’s chest is bigger!”

“.....”

“.....”

“.....Big Sis.”

Not just Karis but even the El Search Party became dead silent. Single word that Elsword spoke almost like a groan was representing everyone's feelings.

Karis unconsciously stared blankly at Raven's chest due to hearing such ridiculous words then glared at Elesis while grinding her teeth.

“....Just what are you doing, human?”

“Big Brother Raven has bigger chest than you Karis. Can you not tell just by looking?”

Elesis spoke while grinning. Karis seriously wanted to kill everyone here right now. And Raven wanted to put his clothes back on quickly.

Karis who was shaking in anger snapped while stuttering her words now.

“A, are you joking? It's already bad enough that a mere human got in the way of conversation between demons.....”

“You can't admit defeat because Big Brother Raven is a man? Alright, then Big Sister Rena.”

“.....W, wait!”

Rena realized what was about to happen and tried to escape but Elesis had already gone behind Rena and forcefully pushed her towards Karis.

Elesis pushed Rena tightly towards Karis to make two of their chests touch then grinned as if she was saying 'I told you so'.

“There, you see now right? We the El Search Party have two entire people that have bigger chest than you, demon.”

“Just what is that supposed to.....”

Karis had never imagined something like this would happen. Elesis spoke sharply after seeing Karis shake from bottomless humiliation.

“So you don't have to come out all the way here to show off your chest, small-fry. We'll come for your head soon. So just stay put quietly in an empty room shivering in fear. We'll certainly make you pay for disturbing Elrios.”

“H, how.....”

Karis who was shaking and at a loss for words disappeared in an instant. She had decided that talking with Elesis would only hurt her image even more.

Seeing that Karis disappeared, Elesis let go of Rena and clicked her tongue.



“She’s didn’t come out.....”

Rena’s face turned red after suddenly being forced into a chest contest. She was about to protest to Elesis but paused. Elesis’ face looked really regretful.

Elesis had been trying to provoke Karis to make her actual self come out through the dimension gate. To strike her neck soon as she came out.

Elesis apologized honestly when her efforts failed.

“I’m sorry, Big Brother Raven, Big Sister Rena. It didn’t work out even though two of you cooperated.”

“.....Don’t do something like this from now on.”

Raven reprimanded maturely and Rena looked like she didn’t know what to say. Elesis grinned.

“You know I love you, right Big Sister Rena?”

“I’ll get angry if you do something like this again.”

“Can’t you get angry beforehand? I can’t make any promises.”

“Why you....”

Other Search Party members that were watching from the distance were just staring blankly. They understood Elesis’ intentions..... but they couldn’t say anything because it was so mind blowing.

“Kahahahahaha!”

But Add who was watching blankly came to his senses then burst out into a refreshing laughter. He wasn’t intending to laugh but the laughter just burst out from within him. It was so funny that his head felt numb.

You could tell instantly that Karis was strong, that she was a powerful demon in this universe as well.

But for that Karis to be so humiliated!

Add laughed to the point where he was shaking regardless of how the other members looked at him strangely. It felt like all the weariness in his mind that he built up from deadly struggles against the demons where he even had to resort to jumping through time was getting cleared out completely.

Elesis grinned brightly.

“You must have liked it, Add.”

“Kukukuk, yes, it’s fun, it’s so fun!”

This El Search Party was strong. They weren’t just strong.....they had the leisure to laugh at the demons.

For Add who had been dwelling in deep discouragement and despair because he’s been through too many desperate battles and was blocked by a giant obstacle called D, just watching this scene refreshed his heart.

“Alright, I’ll help out since I came all this way!”

He should be able to find a way to get rid of D if he hanged around this group. This conviction made Add make a smile filled with lunacy as he clenched his fists tightly.

Crash!!

Karis threw a mirror away to shatter it then panted heavily. Succubus and Incubus massaging her shoulders and legs quickly bowed then backed out.

“Just who was that barbaric human? She ruined everything!”

She felt like going through a dimension gate right now to kill all of them. Karis got angry more she thought about what happened that she took out her frustration by throwing any objects she saw.

A heavy voice was heard when Karis was fuming with anger.

“Calm down Karis.”

“.....Why are you here?”

Voice that she knew, someone she couldn’t treat lightly.

Enraged Karis sighed then settled her mind a bit. When Karis suppressed her rage and turned around to look, a giant demon, Scar was standing there.

“She must have got you good. That’s why I said you shouldn’t do such a thing.”

“.....You must know who it is.”

“Of course, I’ve fought her before.”

Karis didn’t like the tone of how Scar spoke about the red haired girl but didn’t want to ask any further. Karis brushed up her hair then made a huge sigh.

“Can’t I just go there and kill them all?”

“No, we have to stay here in order to revive the demon god.”

“It’s such a strange system.....”

Scar smiled bitterly when Karis expressed her dissatisfaction. Karis couldn’t take Scar lightly, but Karis in Scar’s point of view was somewhat the same.

It was more correct to say they were respecting each other for now because they had the same goals.

“I’m going to send my minions as a test. Do you have any requests?”

“.....Make sure to bring Luciela and that red hair alive. I’ll finish them with my own hands for sure. I’ll make them pay for humiliating me.”

“Not the Red Haired knight.”

“What?”

Karis glared in a surge of anger but Scar’s expression didn’t change.

“I’ll be the one to finish her.”

“.....”

Karis frowned. They had the same goal of destroying Elrios but Karis didn’t like Scar too much.

She could respect him but their personalities didn’t fit too well.

Well, there were almost no demons that Karis respected. Isn’t that why she betrayed and tried to kill her old master Lu, no Luciela?

“.....Fine, but kill her in front of my eyes. Is that fine with you?”

“If possible.”

“Is that all the business you had?”

Scar spoke in a heavy voice in response to Karis’ tone that was telling him to go back now.

“Dragon sent us a message.”

“.....”

Karis’ face stiffened.

This wasn’t just any dragon. Dragon that Scar was referring to was a truly terrifying existence. An existence that even she who shouldn’t be afraid of anything didn’t dare to face so easily.

“He said a foreign substance entered our universe.”

“Foreign substance? What does that mean?”

“I don’t know. But he told us to contact him if we find it.”

Scar said this then turned around. While listening to Scar’s footsteps getting further, Karis leaned her chin on her hands then sighed. She wholeheartedly agreed with annihilating Elrios but she didn’t like joining up with dragons, especially that one.

“Although there were positive outcomes because of it.....”

Karis who was deep in thought for a moment shook her head soon after. Her pace got messed up because of that red hair. No matter who the enemy was, no matter what the situation was, all she had to do was enjoy, taunt then kill them.

“Fine! Come, El Search Party. I’ll kill you all.”

Beautiful demon laughed sinisterly.

3. Confession

Night at the Ash Covered Village.

After defeating the demons and also defeating(?) Karis, El Search Party prepared to camp outside. After eating dinner, girls went to bathe and guys prepared to camp outside.

Add sat beside Elsword who was organizing his sleeping bag and abruptly asked.

“.....Was Elesis always like that?”

Add had only encountered Elesis as an enemy. Of course the fact that she was still amazingly skilled and wasn’t someone you wanted to fight if possible was the same. But Add hadn’t known that she was this much of a playful and broad minded person.

Was broad minded the right way to describe her? Should he say that she possessed both wit and fortitude?

“Big Sis was always amazing.”

“No what I meant was.....”

Add was trailing his words when the girls that went to bathe earlier came back.

“Guys can go bathe now.”

Add stole a glance at the moisture on Eve’s hair then got up.

Elsword, Raven, Chung, Add and Ciel headed to the river they located beforehand. Everyone was walking silently when.....Raven brought up an abrupt topic.

With an extremely troubled tone...

“.....Is my chest big?”

“.....”

How am I supposed to answer that? Add pretended he didn’t hear. Elsword measured with his eyes then nodded.

“It is probably. Right Chung?”

“.....Why are you asking me Elsword?”

Chung got startled and trailed his words. Ciel joined in on the conversation.

“It’s on the big side, Raven.”

“.....I see.”

Ciel added when Raven acknowledged with a low voice.

“But girls like guys with big chest.”

“Really?”

Add asked hastily without realizing he did then waved his hands when everyone’s gazes gathered on him.

“It’s not like I care. I just need it for research data.”

That’s right, according to Eun’s words, he needed to raise affection points of one of the girls in order to go back to his own universe. Although he had no clue what he needed to do to raise them.

Ciel replied slowly.

“It makes you look dependable. Bigger looks more manly.”

“.....”

Add hadn’t cared about manliness before but ended up unconsciously staring at his own chest. He was never conscious of it before.

It’s not like Add wanted to show off to girls. This was just the feeling of not wanting to have any flaws...probably. It was difficult to describe why but he felt strangely bothered.

Elsword and Chung must have felt the same as Add because they were looking down at their own chests. Then the three of their gazes gathered on Raven’s chest again.

“.....It is big after all.”

“.....”

Raven was making an expression as if he didn’t know what to say at Chung’s exclamation. When the atmosphere turned strange, Ciel offered some words of consolation.

“You don’t have to be hasty. It’ll get bigger as you grow up.”

“I didn’t care in particular.”

Ciel just passed over Add’s agitated answer with a smile as if he knew how Add felt all too well.

It was a second time but Add didn't like bathing with other people after all. Add washed quickly then headed to the campsite quickly.

“.....Although I don't know if it's really second time.”

Weren't there countless times that he couldn't remember? Add stopped his steps and took out Eun from his jacket. But Eun was sound asleep and didn't look like she was going to wake up.

“Why is she always asleep?”

He thought about waking her to get additional information but he already heard most of what he needed to hear. Look for a way to defeat D here while raising the affection point of someone who'll give him a kiss at the same time.

“.....It sounds easy when you say it. But...”

People here don't have any idea who D was and the kiss part was even more hopeless. Anyways, he'll have to think about both of these tasks as he followed this El Search Party around.

“Alright.”

Fix the Dynamos first then find a way to defeat D while helping this group with their battles. For the affection point issue, he'll experiment a bit then lean towards the path that has the most chance of success.

Add decided his course of action and was about to move forward but stopped. Elesis was approaching him.

“You washed really fast, Add.”

“.....”

She was speaking with a smile but Add couldn't help but to become cautious. Add had suffered so much because of Elesis that he couldn't easily recognise her as an ally.

He was worried that she'll turn on him all of a sudden and try to strike his neck.

Of course how she made mockery of Karis was delightful and judging by the other Search Party members' reactions such thing shouldn't happen.

In the first place, this Elesis was a different individual than Elesis that Add knew.

He knew that in his head but couldn't help but to become nervous.

“Why aren't you answering? Did something bad happen? Is Elsword making fun of your chest? Should I scold him for you?”

“....What do you want?”

Add replied with a low voice. Elesis was acting quite friendly but he couldn't help but to feel like an herbivore being forced to talk to a carnivore with a full stomach.

"Shall we take a walk for a bit?"

Elesis' tone was soft but Add couldn't refuse her for some reason. Add reluctantly walked beside her.

Elesis stretched as she bent her neck left and right.

"Good work during the fight earlier."

"You and that demon should have taken care of almost all of them."

Elesis and Lu had a huge hand in defeating over 100 demons within such a short time. Of course, other members were strong but those two weren't just defeating the enemies, you had to say they were sweeping through them.

"But you worked so hard to the point where you became shorter."

"....."

Elesis wouldn't have invited him to walk with her for no reason.

"So what do you want from me?"

"I think something happened to my comrade so I'm just trying to find out what. Is there a problem?"

That's right, Add right now wasn't Add that Elesis knew. Add had basically thrown out the original Add that was here before and taken his place.

And Elesis was suspecting him right now.

"You, are you really Add?"

No, it wasn't going to end with just suspicion, Elesis' hand was already grabbing her sword hilt. Elesis had withdrawn her smile and was staring at Add sharply.

"There will be trouble if you don't explain properly."

"....."

She meant that she was going to resort to force if necessary.

Of course.....she couldn't possibly guess that Add came from an parallel universe. Things like there being a world with someone similar to you was something that'd only come up in young people's imaginations.

It's not like Elesis had any concrete evidence either. Only thing she had to go on was that Add looks younger than before, became shorter and..... various possible minor guesses.

It's just your imagination. What are you saying? Did you hurt your head during the battle? I already explained to the other members that I became like this due to a side effect of an experiment. Don't overreact.

Add could play innocent all he wanted. Elesis certainly didn't have any clear evidences to expose Add. She wouldn't have invited him to talk one on one otherwise.

“I'm at a loss for words.....”

But Add was marveled. Elesis was terrifying as an enemy but she was also too much to handle as an ally.

“How did you know? We didn't even talk that much.”

“Add usually tries really hard to avoid me. He would have run away quickly if I asked him to talk with me like this.”

“.....”

Add also shared those feelings. Add sent Add B a bitter sympathy then shook his head.

“It will take long time to explain. I'll talk when everyone is gathered.”

“Hmm.....”

“I won't cause any harm to you guys so decide after you listen to what I say.”

Add ended the topic like this then asked because he was really curious.

“So you suspected me just because I didn't refuse to take a walk with you?”

“That's something I just asked for no particular reason.”

Elesis answered as if it was no big deal.

“There's no harm in asking right?”

“.....You were randomly scoping me out?”

“Not really. Add wouldn't have normally wanted to be in this kind of village for too long. He would have strongly suggested that we should leave soon as possible because it was too dusty.”

Well that was true. Add didn't like this village with ash flying everywhere either. Elesis shrugged then stretched out her hand.

Elesis murmured as she stroked the area around Add's eyes.

"Also, you look extremely tired. Like an exhausted traveler during a long journey. It looks as if you will be fine with anywhere long as you can have a place to rest."

Add was startled by her unexpectedly kind voice and gentle touch but froze soon after. Elesis was flipping over Add's eyelids as if it was a natural thing to do.

".....What are you doing?"

"I'm checking if there's anything else wrong with you other than fatigue. I learned palpation during knight classes. Hmm, I don't think there's anything wrong with your ears."

Add annoyingly hit Elesis' hand away. He felt stupid for becoming momentarily embarrassed. But Elesis tilted her head then murmured as if she was confused.

"But you acting like this is just like Add. You're like Add but not like Add at the same time. I don't think you're a demon....."

"Don't pry, I said I'll explain everything."

"Right now was because I was really worried. Try having Big Sister Rena take a look at you later."

Elesis said this as she took her hand off her sword then turned around.

"Others should be back by now so come after settling your mind. I'll be waiting there."

".....What are you going to do if I run away?"

"Go ahead if you want. But you won't right?"

Elesis looked back towards Add and grinned.

"How you add an ill-tempered remark at the end is the same as well."

"....."

Elesis walked away. Add was looking at her back and sighing when Eun poked her head out from his jacket pocket.

"You're going to reveal everything? That's not a boy like method."

"It should be better to tell them up to certain extent. Also, get your facts correctly. Hiding information and using it as a bait to control people is your method."

Eun laughed from hearing Add blame.

“Boy must have quite a grudge against me. Can’t you forgive me already?”

“Don’t say that when you’re not even really sorry.”

Eun didn’t say anything when Add scolded her with an angry voice. Add looked up at the night sky and clenched his fists.

“I can agree with your goals but I won’t agree with your methods. Elesis becoming aware was beyond my calculations but this is also fine. Just telling them everything..... and exchanging information with them should be more helpful with trying to find a way to defeat D.”

“Hmm, boy must have developed an overly soft thought process as well. Boy from before would never have spoken about confessing everything.”

“I didn’t make this choice thoughtlessly. Just you watch.”

“I have a good guess at what boy is aiming for but isn’t it too risky? You might get kicked out from the El Search Party, is there really a reason to risk such a danger?”

Add shook his head.

“There’s a limit to fooling them. Also, continuing to play innocent will restrict the amount of actions I can take. I’d rather just open up the room for discussion and obtain whatever information I can. Maybe I could get some useful information if I asked their opinion about D.”

“Still, getting expelled from the El Search Party is a huge risk. Are you confident?”

“.....That probably won’t happen.”

Even if they were to become cautious of him, it’ll just end with them tying him up or just keeping him on surveillance. But Eun must have thought differently because she hummed.

“Boy must have concluded that the El Search Party will accept him openly.”

“.....”

El Search Party that Add had witnessed so far was overly soft minded.... this place wasn’t too much different either so what Eun was saying was correct.

“Boy has changed a lot. He wouldn’t have come up with this kind of plan before.”

“.....Yes, I might have changed as well.”

It was to the point where Eve complimented him. Eun asked allusively when Add answered with a bitter voice.

“If everything goes well, if we go back to our own universe and successfully defeat D, what will you do next?”

“That’s of course.....”

Go back to the past? Steal Eve’s core? Add from before would have immediately answered he was going to but the answer didn’t come to him so easily right now.

El Search Party risked their lives to face D even while knowing the extent of his power.

They believed that Add will change the future.

But Add will steal Eve’s core and destroy the El Search Party even if he’s successful in defeating D. There was no way that the El Search Party could be maintained when he steals Eve’s core and steals her life.

Add bit his lips then turned around.

That was something to think about later. There were things that had to be done right now.

The group sat around the campfire after finishing dinner and washing. Everyone was talking to each other about today’s events.

“Elsword, dry your hair properly.”

“.....Why do you have to nag like that?”

“You can’t have your beddings get wet. We have to use them again. So hurry up and dry your hair.”

Elsword reluctantly took the towel Aisha handed to him. He looked like he didn’t want to but was doing so because things will get noisy if he refused.

“Can I see the map Raven?”

“Here.”

“It’s faster to go through the hot springs to reach the Grand Cavern..... But we’ll have to join up with the Fire Priestess before that.”

“There might be enemies at the hot springs.”

Rena and Raven were looking at the map and discussing future plans.

“Good work today, Ms.Eve.”

“You must be tired. Go and rest early Chung.”

“Ah, Ara’s lap is perfect for a pillow after all.”

“It tickles, Ms.Elesis.”

Elesis was lying down with her legs stretched and rubbing her cheek against Ara’s lap. She reminded him of a cat that found a warm den...no, another bigger animal in the cat family.

“I’m getting tired, Ciel.”

“Alright, let’s sleep.”

Lu and Ciel were about to lie down. Add who was watching the group’s actions from a bit further away made up his mind and stood up.

“I have something to tell all of you.”

He was prepared..... But trying to actually say it out loud made him nervous. Gazes of the group that were resting, eyes of 10 people all gathered on Add.

Elesis who questioned Add before only had one eye open and had a sleepy expression. But she did look like she was going to listen properly.

Add who was looking up at the night sky made up his mind and opened his mouth.

“It will be difficult to understand but what I’m about to say isn’t a lie or a joke. It’s a truth that you should all know.”

“Don’t waste time with useless words and get to the point, now useless Add.”

Add nodded at Eve’s sharp remark.

“I’m not Add that you all know.”

“.....Did he eat something strange?”

Aisha who was neatly folding the towel she got back from Elsword stopped moving her hands and made a puzzled expression. Add didn’t mind her reaction and continued speaking.

“I’m Add that came from a universe different than this one. I’m Add from a parallel universe.”

“What’s a parallel universe?”

“.....I know what it is.”

Aisha spoke with a sullen voice as she twirled her hair with her finger.



“Ah, Ara's lap is perfect for a pillow after all.”

“That’s a strange and random thing to say. But let’s say what you’re saying is correct. Then where’s Add who’s our comrade?”

“.....He got deflected to somewhere else because I jumped to here.”

“So?”

Elesis got up from Ara’s lap and asked with a sleepy face.

“You didn’t come to our universe to get rid of our comrade Add right?”

“.....Do you actually believe him Big Sister Elesis?” Aisha protested.

“I don’t think Big Brother is lying.”

Elsword answered instead. Aisha made a dumfounded expression then drew a large circle with her finger.

“You probably don’t know because you’re stupid..... But parallel universes might exist in theory but its existence have never been confirmed. Also, even if it exists, moving between them is impossible. Do you even know what a gravitational force is? How about attractive and repulsive forces?”

Aisha snapped as if she was telling Elsword ‘don’t talk about something so stupid’. She was acting like a scholar who just got her theory and beliefs challenged.

“Force that binds objects to each other, this also applies to universes. It’s impossible for people from our universe to jump to a different universe! Opposite is true as well!”

“But I actually did that.....”

“Do you have a proof? Give me a proof that you broke through the restraint of the universe!”

Aisha stood up as if she couldn’t bare to listen anymore. Add shook his head bitterly.

“Giving such a proof is impossible. I’ll have to scientifically prove that I’m different from Add that was here before. But it’s already difficult enough to prove self-continuity where if me from 10 minutes before and 10 minutes after are same individuals. So proving this will be even more difficult.”

“I can’t trust you if you can’t give me any objective proof. Are you planning something strange again? Could it be that you’re.....?”

“Let’s hear him out for now. Continue what you were saying before.”

When Raven mediated, Aisha bit her lips and sat down even though she still looked dissatisfied as if she couldn’t believe Add’s words.

“Yes. I didn’t come here because I wanted to. Our universe.....is in danger of being destroyed. I came here to look for a way to escape from that destruction.”

“Destruction?”

“.....There’s a demon leader called D. It seems he’s not here in this universe but he can’t be defeated because he’s too powerful. That’s why I want to find a way to beat him here.”

He skipped the detailed explanation about D. Story would only get more complicated if he said that his future self was trying to control the universe and him right now was trying to stop his future self.

‘I probably don’t need to mention about time travel as well.....’

His immediate objective was to explain the situation and be accepted by this group.

“D.....?”

“I never heard of that name.”

Elesis and Rena tilted their heads.

“Clue to defeating that guy is in our universe? Do you have any leads?”

“.....I don’t know the details myself. So I’d like search for it while traveling together with all of you.”

Add said all that needed to be said. When Add closed his mouth, El Search Party members all exchanged glances.

The atmosphere seemed to be leaning towards accepting Add for now. Not only was El Search Party a group that wouldn’t turn down someone asking for help.....Add looking like Add from this universe would help with his chances as well.

‘Up to here is according to my calculations.....’

By revealing his identity and purpose, he could openly look for information about defeating D.....

“I’m same as Add that you all know but is not at the same time. I won’t ask you to believe what I’m saying right away.....but I’ll prove it through my actions from now on.”

By appealing that he’s different from Add B that was here before, he can completely reset the affection points that Eun spoke about. It was a method to change the negative affection points back to 0.

Add pretended to look around at the El Search Party while stealing a glance at Eve. Eve who had been acting sassy ever since he met her looked quite shaken right now.

Add was internally singing with joy when Aisha spoke sharply.

“.....Let’s say you came from a parallel universe. But why do we have to help you? We’re already busy with things going on in our universe.”

“That’s.....”

She was theoretically correct. Point Add made just now was a request relying on how the El Search Party was a soft-minded group. Aisha had seen through this and was pressuring Add.

“I can’t agree if it’s not a reason I can accept.”

Add hadn’t expected this to go completely smoothly. He expected some opposition.

Add clenched his fists tightly at Aisha’s cold deduction.

He had to answer properly here but he didn’t know which words would be effective. Regardless, his mouth was moving on its own.

“That’s because.... why I’m asking you guys is because.....”

Desperation in his heart formed his words.

“.....You guys are the ones that sent me here.”

“Us?”

“We did?”

When everyone couldn’t understand, Aisha reluctantly explained.

“Basis for parallel universe theory is that.... there can be same people in other universes. For example, there could be a great and awesome magician called Aisha in that universe as well.”

“Then will I be there as well?”

Aisha nodded to answer Ara’s question.

“From what I’m hearing, all of us seems to exist in that universe as well.....”

“.....Please.”

Add tightened his fists. He didn’t remember begging ever since he decided to jump over time. He always solved his needs by stealing and destroying. That’s how he has lived so far.

But he had no choice but to beg right now.

“.....Lend me your strengths so I can save all of you.”

El Search Party became quiet when Add begged while bowing his head. At the heavy silence, Add bit down hard on his lips and suppressed his emotions.

They won't be able to easily believe the story about parallel universes after all. It was normal for them to suspect if a demon in disguise was plotting something.

"Give me a chance....to fix my mistake."

They gave everything they had to send him to this universe.

They threw away their lives trusting that Add could certainly find a way.

He had to answer to their trust. He could bow his head many times as it was needed for this sake.

"It's better to have more comrades to fight against the demons."

"I also agree, Big Sis."

Add slowly raised his head at Elesis and Elsword's words. Elesis grinned brightly.

"That was an interesting story. We'll help any way we can."

"Hmph, I still can't believe that he came from a parallel universe..... But I'll help him out since he's asking for help."

"Long as he doesn't get in our way."

"I don't think he's lying."

When even Aisha, Rena and Raven agreed, Add bit his lips from being immersed in an indescribable feeling. He couldn't even begin to imagine what face he was making right now.

"Wait a moment."

Eve asked with a cold voice.

"Then what happened to original Add who supposedly got deflected out?"

".....He'll come back when I return to my universe."

This was actually what Eun said and Add didn't know if this was true. But he had no choice but to say it. Eve looked very dissatisfied with the answer but Elesis shrugged.

"Eve, I know you're worried but we can't just tell him to go back right? Let's listen to him more in detail and also think of a way to bring original Add back."

"I wasn't particularly worried. I just wanted to be sure."

Eve answered like this but seemed like she was going to defer the issue for now. Although she was still staring at Add coldly.

“Then let’s get along well from now on, new Mr....Add. You are Mr.Add right?”

“Yes, Big Sister Ara. He did say he’s a same person from a different universe.”

“Parallel universes huh.....”

Lu seemed like she recalled something.

“Do you know anything about this, Lu?”

“Not really, I think I remember reading some record related to it. But I cannot remember clearly. Then let’s hear your story. Tell me how I was in your universe.”

Lu urged with an anticipant expression.

“I never saw you and Ciel on our side.”

“That’s different from what you said before. Didn’t you say the El Search Party from your universe sent you here?”

“It’s not like parallel universes are exactly the same. There could be various details that are different. For example, me who’s more grown up?”

No, you didn’t grow at all.

Add wanted to deny Aisha’s example out loud but quietly withheld himself. It felt like it’d break the mood.

Elesis smiled when the atmosphere changed towards everyone accepting Add.

“Other universes is an interesting topic.... But shall we listen to Lu and Ciel’s stories as well? Who was that demon called Karis?”

Lu put her hands on her waist then opened her mouth after looking around once at the El Search Party.

“I’m lord of the demon realm, Luciela. Although I lost my powers due to some circumstances and turned into this form. But let’s get along well from now on. Also, this man is my soul companion, Ciel.”

“Nice to meet you.”

Ciel raised his hand to greet everyone even though he had already introduced himself and even bathed together with the guys. It felt like he was playing along for Lu’s sake.

“You can call me Lu, I’ll allow it.”

“Why is a demon trying to join our side?”

Rena asked with a very wary voice. Eve also looked reluctantly at Lu and spoke.

“There must have been a quarrel amongst the demons.”

“Karis was originally my subordinate. But she became like that because she was too greedy. I fell into their trap and escaped to Elrios with only portion of my power. Now I’m trying to regain my old powers and stop the demon army.”

“Portion of your power? That wasn’t your full strength?”

Add spoke out in surprise. Her skills from before was amazing in itself.

In Add’s eyes, Lu was at least equal to Elesis who appeared as their enemy in universe A or even above.

Then should he help Lu get her power back.....then ask her to defeat D? Lu saw Add running his brain busily and joyfully raised both of her arms.

“This isn’t even close to my original power. You’ll be very amazed once you see.”

Ciel silently put a blanket around Lu who was boasting. Ciel was just caring for Lu so she wouldn’t get cold from the night wind..... but seeing Lu boast while wearing a blanket around her like a cape didn’t make her sound all too convincing.

“I’m trying to help Lu with defeating the demons. I also have a debt to pay back to Karis.”

“So Karis was plotting something evil after all. I should have stopped her at that time.”

Ara spoke with a gloomy voice. Lu replied slowly as if she understood what Ara meant.

“I already know that demons caused innumerable tragedies and destruction in Elrios. You obviously wouldn’t be able to trust me easily. But I’m strongly opposed to demons trying to destroy Elrios. It’s already hard enough to join our strengths just to survive, but they are trying to do something outrageous only out of their greed for attacking the Celestial Realm. Warmongering faction’s policy will eventually lead the Demon Realm to ruin as well.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Dragon, that isn’t something you should join hands with. Its flames will fall upon the Demon Realm after Elrios.”

Lu sighed then looked around at the group.

“I heard rumors about you all even in the Demon Realm. El Search Party, you people were called the only hope for Elrios that’s on the path to destruction. I witnessed with my own eyes today and all of you were truly beautiful lifeforms shining like stars standing against darkness of the night sky. If my will is same as yours, then I’d like you all to lend me your strengths.”

“That’s not true.”

Elsword who was listening answered. It was such a short answer that what he meant couldn’t be interpreted quickly.

When everyone’s gazes gathered on him, Elsword slowly denied.

“We’re not lending strengths. We’re fighting together.”

“That’s my brother.”

Elesis smiled satisfactorily and nodded.

“Many lives disappeared after demons invaded Elrios. People of Elrios are now filled with loathing whenever they hear about demons. Kingdom that Elsword and I tried to protect.....also disappeared into flames. I’ll never be able to erase the despair and rage I felt at the time.”

“What?”

Does that mean the Velder Kingdom was destroyed? Add who was listening opened his eyes widely from surprise.

Elesis gave a slight glance at Add then stared forwards again.

Lu was biting her lips in agony.

“Although our beliefs are different, they are my race. I know asking all of you to differentiate me with them is an overburdening request....”

“But wills of everyone gathered here are the same.”

Elesis shook her head then spoke clearly.

“Defeat Scar and stop the demon god from reviving. Defeat Karis during the process and eradicate all the lesser demons following them as well. Stop the destruction of Elrios and also stop the destruction of the Demon Realm. This is our current duty and our will.”

“.....”

“And anyone who agrees with this is our comrade. It doesn’t matter if you came from a different universe or are a demon. Long as you agree to the purpose of ending the war.”

Elesis stood up and held out her hand. Lu hesitated with a dazed expression then smiled brightly as she shook Elesis' hand.

“Thank you for trusting me. Let’s do our best from now on!”

“Yes, let’s. Add too.”

Add confusedly nodded when Elesis spoke as she turned her head towards him. Other members didn’t say anything more.

Elesis changed the topic after finishing the businesses with Add, Lu and Ciel.

“Alright, then let’s come up with a plan for tomorrow.”

Next day.

El Search Party divided into two teams and headed to their destinations.

Add was included in the same team as Rena, Eve, Elesis and Lu. They were going to scout the hot springs and liberate it from demons if necessary.

He was the only guy here. It was a perfect environment to raise those affection points that Eun kept talking about.

But that was a story for when it wasn’t raining.

Shwaaaaaaaa.....

They couldn’t even see 5 meters in front of them because of the heavy downpour. El Search Party moved below a tree to escape from the rain. They did set up some poles with a cloth on top to block the rain but they couldn’t do anything about getting wet before they set the whole thing up.

“This rain would have been nothing if my Dynamos were normal.....”

Add could now mobilize 4 Dynamos at once because he repaired them overnight. But they weren’t still perfect. It was still too much to generate a rain barrier.

“It’s noisy so mutter more quietly, useless Add that came from another universe.”

Eve who was sitting on top of Moby frowned and scolded Add. She was still acting sassy even after knowing Add was a different person that came from another universe.

Lu who was looking far out into the distance while sitting on top of a tree trunk joined in on the conversation with a passerby tone.

“Looks like this rain will last long. It’s going to pour all night.”

“....”

“....”

Rena and Eve were silent to Lu's words. Add had no choice but to be unlike himself and keep the conversation going.

“Weren't we supposed to cross a river? Then advancing further today will be difficult.”

“We'll decide when Elesis comes back from examining what's ahead.”

Rena spoke for the first time after they had moved under a tree. A drop of water on her forehead dripping down along her cheek made her look very beautiful. Although Add didn't dare to reply to her because her cold atmosphere surpassed her beauty.

But Lu responded nonchalantly.

“Then we can have dinner here. I don't know much about cooking so please take care of it for me.”

“....”

“....”

Eve and Rena didn't answer again. Add continued the conversation while feeling quite reluctant.

“We don't have that many ingredients so I'm not sure. And I'm also not too great at cooking.”

“Seriously, you're so meticulously useless.”

When Eve snapped as if she was waiting for him to say this, Add unknowingly became furious.

“Does that mean your highness Queen of Nasods knows how to cook?”

“I have no need to cook personally.”

Ophelia appeared through the dimension gate soon as Eve's words ended. Ophelia had a sharp kitchen knife in her hand. You could tell from a single glance that she was experienced in cooking.

“You're making your servants cook in the end. Don't speak as if you're the one who's doing it.”

“But my Ophelia is more useful than your Dynamos.”

“What?”

Add flew into a fit of rage as an engineer but Eve stared back haughtily. It was frustrating! It was frustrating but he had no choice but to admit. There was no cooking feature in the Dynamos yet!

“Don't make me laugh. What's so great about a cooking feature? I'll surpass it in couple days.”

“You’ll be a bit less useless if that’s possible. But you’re extremely useless at the moment.”

“.....You’ll takes those words back once you try today’s dinner.”

“Are you saying that you’ll cook personally?”

Eve stared at Add as if she was seriously surprised. Add regretted reacting out of passion but the water was already spilt.

“There’s no reason that I can’t. Take back what you said about my Dynamos being useless if my cooking suits your tastes.”

“If it can satisfy my taste that’s been tuned towards Ophelia’s cooking. Although such a thing will be impossible for your useless Dynamos.”

Add could somewhat accept words saying he was useless. No, it made him angry but he could bare with it. But he couldn’t stand hearing that his Dynamos were useless.

Add glared back at Eve from getting seriously angry but Eve just snorted back.

“Stop it you two. I can’t listen well.”

Then Rena butted in to stop the two’s argument. Add and Eve were about to turn their heads away from each other in contempt when Lu meddled from above.

“I’ll watch the surroundings so leave them to it. That’s how kids grow up.”

“.....”

“.....”

Eve and Rena ignored Lu again. They were pretending that they haven’t heard Lu as if they were forbidden from replying to her. Even Add who just joined this El Search Party could tell that Rena and Eve were quite uncomfortable with Lu. No it was beyond uncomfortable. They were hostile to her.

Should he reply again instead or not? Add was frowning from this distasteful choice when it looked like a person’s shadow appeared inside the downpour then Elesis dashed in.

“How was it? How was the river?” Lu asked.

“I saw and it’s no use today. We’ll have to stop for today.”

Completely drenched Elesis shook her head as she muttered. Rain water splattered everywhere whenever her head moved.

“You’ll catch a cold if you stay like that, Elesis.”

“Ah, I should change. Add, can you look away for a bit?”

“Stay outside for a bit, Add.”

“.....In this rain?”

They were telling him to stay outside in this downpour that could drench someone completely in just 3 seconds?

“Ah, it’s fine. I’ll trust you so just turn away, Add.”

“It’s still too irresponsible, Elesis. This is rude to Add as well.”

Rena scolded Elesis then stretched out a cloth with both of her hands to block Elesis from being exposed while changing. Eve also joined in on the security.

“.....Ophelia, keep an eye on Add and attack if you have to.”

He felt Ophelia who’s carrying a sharp kitchen knife moving to stand behind him. Looking would only make things awkward, so why were they so suspicious? Geez.

Add was muttering internally but then looked down from feeling something move inside his jacket.

Eun who had awoken poked her head out slightly to look at Add with a mischievous expression, she then poked Add’s chest with her elbow. Add knew what she meant right away but ignored her.

Yes, I know that I have to kiss someone if I want to go back to my universe. I also know that now where I’m the only guy here is a great chance.

But he had no idea what he should do.

“Ah, you can look back now.”

Add was turning around while groaning internally then his expression became numb.

“It feels refreshing after changing after all.”

Elesis was in her bunny girl outfit again. Its color was different than before and was black this time. When Add stared numbly from shock, Elesis looked down at her chest.

“Oh, this? It’s an outfit I wore while I was in a circus. Do you want to wear it too Add?”

“Circus?”

“Demons were causing ruckus all over the place so I had to disguise myself in order to gather intelligence. No one ever suspected when I moved about while wearing this.”

That makes sense, no one would ever suspect that a girl wearing a bunny girl costume was actually the strongest Red Knights captain. He could understand.....

But a guy who was looking at her felt uncomfortable.

“But why did you change into that right now?”

“Hmm? Because it feels comfortable.”

“.....Elesis.”

Elesis looked back confusedly when Rena called her name.

“But Big Sister Rena, you wore them together with me before without any complaints. What’s wrong now?”

“You should wear something appropriate for the situation. I thought I gave you some proper clothes to change into.”

“Ah, they all got dirty while fighting with Lu..... Isn’t that right, Lu?”

“That’s right, your clothes got torn so I gave you some time to change.”

“Come to think of it, I promised you before right Lu? Want one? I have multiple of the same outfit with varying sizes.”

“.....Just why would you keep so many of those around?”

When Add questioned from not being able to comprehend, Elesis replied with a face as if it was obvious.

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. You never know what might happen.”

So she keeps multiple bunny girl outfits around just in case she needs them? Rena pressed her hand on her forehead then sighed when Add stared confusedly.

“Don’t get any wrong ideas. We needed various objects in order to scout a city occupied by the demons.”

“I even have witch and nurse outfits too. Eve, you saw them too right?”

“.....That was the most violent nurse in the world.”

Eve had a sigh mixed into her voice as well but Elesis didn’t mind too much.

“Everyone got soaked right? Let’s all change before we sleep.”

“I’m going to change into pajamas.”

“Me too....”

“Aww, But Eve and Big Sister Rena will look much better in them than me.”

Elesis looked very disappointed as she looked straightly at Add. She looked as if she thought of something amusing.

“You want try wearing them Add?”

“.....Drop it. If we’re going to stay here, let’s prepare to camp out for the night.”

“Before that, a meal, dinner comes first. I’m extremely starving.”

Lu hopped down from the tree and stretched both of her arms widely. Eve and Rena’s faces stiffened but Elesis spoke while smiling.

“Alright, then shall we ask Ophelia today as well?”

“No, apparently Add is going to cook today also.”

Eve spoke while looking at Add challengingly. Elesis opened her eyes widely in surprise.

“What? Add? You cooked in your universe?”

“.....Long as it’s something simple.”

Add wasn’t lying. He had to take care of eating and sleeping by himself before he joined the El Search Party. In the first place, Add’s tastes weren’t particularly picky (He did grow up while eating good foods when he was young, but he’s been through so much hardship since then) so he could eat anything long as they were up to normal standards.

He didn’t want to back out when the Dynamos were insulted.

There was no problem long as he defeated Ophelia....with his cooking skills! Eve declared coldly at Add’s challenge.

“Then let’s start the cooking competition between Nasod and human.”

Lu and Elesis made a very hungry expression.

Ingredients were provided from the El Search Party’s reserves.

Add created fire with his Dynamo then grabbed a kitchen knife. Eve who was watching Ophelia with her arms folded declared.

“Category is curry. Rena will be our judge. It should be fair this way.”

Rena who ended up becoming their judge gave them a slightly tiresome nod. It seemed Rena was playing along because Eve was so fired up.

Add collected himself then decided to make potato slices. He was quickly peeling the potatoes when a voice of admiration was heard from beside him.

“Wow, you’re really good at peeling that. Our Add would say ‘don’t make me laugh’ when we made him cook.”

Elesis was on tiptoes looking over Add’s shoulder to watch him cook. Add was fine with her watching but it was bothersome because her position made it so she was basically sticking close to Add’s back.

It was especially bothersome with the outfit she was wearing.

“You’re distracting me. Go away.”

“I’m just curious. Can I watch a bit longer?”

Add frowned and was about to shoo her off then got surprised from taking a glance at the cutting board. Steamed potato that he should have finished peeling was nowhere to be seen.

Lu was gracefully chewing with her mouth.

“Middle Realm’s potato is quite good. It’s a taste hard to come by in the Demon Realm!”

“Why are you eating it so confidently?!”

She just ate the potato he peeled! Add was feeling dumbfounded when Elesis asked while smacking her lips.

“Can I have one too?”

“.....Are you guys possessed by ghosts that couldn’t eat potatoes their entire life?”

Well, the El Search Party from original universe was like this too. Elesis rubbed her belly when Add frowned.

“I became hungry because I ran around so much. Just let me have one.”

“.....Ah, seriously.”

How ridiculous. But having bunny girl Elesis rubbing her belly right behind his back was annoying. Add quickly peeled a potato and threw it towards her as a way of saying just eat this and go away. Elesis caught the potato joyfully.

“Thanks a lot!”

“Don’t just eat it like that, have some salt with it. And here’s some water too.”

It felt like she would get in his way if he left her alone so Add even gave her salt and water. Then he resumed cooking, he cut some green onions and was about to cut the carrots that he washed before..... But half of the carrots had been moved to an unexpected location.

Into Lu and Elesis’ mouths.

“.....”

Add stopped moving his kitchen knife and stared at them in disbelief. Noticing Add’s gaze, Lu finished swallowing an entire carrot and Elesis slowly pulled out partly eaten carrot from her mouth and held it in her hand as she explained.

“Because I’m a rabbit.....”

“....Just shut up.”

Elesis shut her mouth and lowered her gaze when Add got seriously annoyed and spoke agitatedly. It seemed she at least understood that she did something wrong.

“It was because I was hungry. I apologize if I got in your way. I’ll stay put now.”

Lu also lowered her head and stared at the ground.Add was sure he was cooking but the mood here was like a funeral. There was no way he could focus on cooking with these two emitting gloomy aura beside him.

This was annoying in its own way. While muttering, Add sliced some apples he was going to use as an ingredient, put them on a dish then held the dish out towards Lu and Elesis.

“Only eat things I tell you to from now on.”

“.....Can we eat this?”

“.....Can we really eat this?”

Did these two starve for at least four days? How they were behaving themselves merely because of some apples was quite baffling and funny at the same time that Add ended up laughing without realizing.

For two girls that fought while destroying an entire town to turn so modest in front of a guy in an apron.

“Yes, you can eat them.”

“Thank you so much!”

“Thanks, Add!”

Add shook his head from side to side as he saw Lu and Elesis cheer and eat the apples. He didn't know how it ended up like this..... but it was funny.

"Wasting ingredients like that. You must be feeling quite confident."

When Eve approached and spoke to him, Add examined the current status. Ophelia was already approaching the middle stages of her cooking.

"Come to think of it, what happens if I win?"

"You won't win so that's not an issue."

"Yes, I'll admit I'm useless if I lose. But what if I win?"

He didn't say Dynamos were useless. So he could deal with this much.

It was also true that Eve was stronger than him right now.

"Does an engineer talk about ifs? I can't believe this."

"Kukukuk, then were you able to imagine that I was Add from a different universe? Did you ever think about such a possibility?"

He hasn't felt this excited in a long while. When Add went with the flow and sneered, Eve made a very offended expression.

Her expression.... Was completely same as the one in his memories that Add unknowingly stopped sneering.

"Are you that proud about harassing me while hiding your identity? You're a rude individual after all."

"I never said I was polite. I never did."

Add stopped moving his knife then made a sickening smile. His heart felt complicated and stifling but it felt like he shouldn't suppress this feeling.

Eve was silent for a moment at Add's reaction then spoke sharply as if she didn't want to talk anymore.

"Fine, if you win then I'll listen to whatever you say. I'll promise as Empress of Nasods."

"Alright...."

Add smiled then turned around. Eve glared at Add disapprovingly then went back to her original position. Lu and Elesis who were excitedly watching Add and Eve's verbal battle chimed in.

"Do you have a strategy to win?"

“Got any good plans? Want me to help?”

“I’ll also lend you a hand if you give me a cherry tomato!”

“.....Don’t get bribed just by potatoes and apples.”

Add made a bitter smile then started moving his hands. Elesis stared with a strange expression then asked Add.

“I want to eat something sour now. Can I eat this?”

“Not that one.”

Add saw where the tip of Elesis’ hand was pointing and drew the line sharply. She did ask for permission before eating, it was a great improvement.

Seeing that Elesis looked saddened, Add let out a short snicker then brought out some other ingredients.

“I’ll blend some other fruits and make you a juice so wait.”

“I like tomatoes. Make me a juice with those instead!” Lu also joined in.

“Alright, wait a bit.”

Add would have normally refused instantly but he was listening to their requests for some reason while smiling openly.

It felt like he was acting strangely but it didn’t feel bad so he was continuing.

‘Ah, so that’s why.....’

This stupid and soft-minded atmosphere, this atmosphere where they don’t listen to any of his complaints and makes him get caught up in their flow instead.

“It’s been a while.....”

It felt like his body and mind that was in tatters from fights and despair found a place to rest after a long time. He could listen to any childish or ridiculous requests right now.

“Did I get in the way of your cooking?”

“No, not really.....”

Add shook his head then slowly started to pet Lu’s head. Lu got surprised from the sudden touch then frowned.

“Don’t treat me like a little kid!”

“Want cherry tomatoes in your juice?”

“Huh? U, uuuu..... F, fine. I’ll allow it for just 1 minute.”

Lu who was about to get angry was conflicted for a bit then closed her eyes tightly and allowed Add to pet her. Then Elesis crouched down and pushed her head towards Add.

“Alright, Add. You can pet me too.”

“.....”

As Add stared at Elesis in confusion, she lowered her voice and whispered to him as if she was making a secret suggestion. But it could still be heard by Lu clearly.

“But you have to give me more juice than Lu.”

“Such a cowardly method! Add, give me twice as more than Elly! I even let you pet my head!”

“Alright, don’t fight.”

Add let off an empty laugh then resumed cooking. This whole situation was laughable. If him from before saw this he would say he was a soft-minded idiot, he would scold him saying that he should use any methods necessary to win and secure Eve’s wish.....

But doing something stupid like this, having stupid conversations like this.... wasn’t too bad either.



Cooking competition was over. Ophelia's curry was spicy but had a sweet aftertaste. It was vexing but her skills surpassed Add's. It was Add's complete defeat without Rena having to make a decision.

"Compared to that, you couldn't even provide curry for everyone because you wasted your ingredients, useless Add."

Just as she said, Add couldn't even make enough to give to everyone. Lu and Elesis were shocked and opened their eyes widely.

"Could it be because I ate too much....?"

"Did I eat too many potatoes....?"

Lu and Elesis stared at Add nervously but Add took off his apron and held a dish out toward Eve.

"I managed to make enough for 1 person at least. Try it."

"....You couldn't even follow the regulations properly. It's your defeat without me having to try your cooking. Could it be that you don't even possess the ability to determine victory or defeat?"

"Yes, I lost."

Eve must have not expected Add to admit defeat so easily because she had a slightly surprised expression.

"But I can't just throw it out. I made it for you so why don't you try it?"

"....You can't waste food after all."

Although she was a Nasod and didn't need to eat, but her concept that wasting food was bad must be same as humans. Eve took the curry dish Add held out to her with a reluctant expression.

"It will taste bad anyways...."

Eve reluctantly scooped Add's curry with a spoon then brought it to her mouth. Then her face stiffened. Add sneered when Eve stared back at him in surprise.

"Kukukuk, how is it?"

"....."

When Eve couldn't answer right away and was still in shock, Lu and Elesis discretely approached her.

"Why? How does it taste?"

"I'll just have a slight taste."

Lu and Elesis also ate a bit of Add's curry then became surprised.

“It’s a mysterious taste!”

“It tastes special.”

Elesis turned towards Add with a surprised face. How Add’s curry had a sour but fresh taste at the same time was unique, people who liked this kind of taste had more than enough reason to like this curry.

But you couldn’t say it would be a popular curry. Taste that people normally expected from a curry was sweet or spicy.

But Eve who just ate one spoon was speechless.

“I tried mixing in some lemons but it turned out a bit vague. I think it was a failure. Should I throw it out if you don’t like it?”

“.....Didn’t I already say that throwing out food is a crime?”

Eve’s begrudging voice, she wasn’t able to hide her shock. It was a tone as if she was just struck a blow.

Add laughed satisfactorily then backed out.

“Alright, then deal with it however you’d like. I’ll go prepare the tents for sleeping.”

“Add, how about your dinner?”

Rena asked. Add replied appropriately.

“I also ate some while cooking.”

Add let a laugh slip from his mouth as he went to set up the tents. What he made was a strange curry.....but one would like it if they liked things with sour taste.

“Not everyone has to like it. Kukukuk.....”

He just needed to feed one person. Add laughed quietly as he heard clearly from behind him.

Sounds of Eve’s spoon moving.

There were double and triple tents inside Elesis’ bag. Add set up the tents without much trouble thanks to Oberon’s help. Just when Add wiped the sweat off his forehead, a towel was handed to him. Oberon was giving Add a thumbs up and handing him a towel.

“You were pretty good too.”

Oberon was unexpectedly good at setting up tents. It seemed Oberon and Ophelia have been in charge of various minor tasks of the El Search Party.

Honestly, they were above Add's Dynamos in regards to this kind of functionality.

"No, this is only possible because they are human type. My Dynamos are better for things that human types can't do. Not only that, but my Dynamos are smaller so they are easy to carry around. Although these guys appear through dimension gates too....."

Add was talking to himself when he felt a chin touch his shoulder from his back. He turned around annoyingly.

"Just say it if you want to have a word, Ren-....."

"You finished these while we were eating?"

It was Elesia. That's right, it was Rena that Add knew before who would have acted overly friendly like this. This universe's Rena was inspecting her weapon right now.

Judging by her strict face and cold expression, she was totally not someone who would attempt this kind of skinship.

"Did you have something to say to Big Sister Rena?"

".....It's fine. Just state your business."

It would be stranger to compare those two. Let's just accept that this and other Renas are different.

Elesia spoke as she smiled.

"Where do you want to sleep, Add?"

"Of course in the double....."

Even a bit less crowded place was better. Add was about to say this but Add's expression turned stiff.

Wasn't everyone here girls except for Add?

"....."

Elesia grinned when Add moved only his eyes to stare at her. She was grinning, did she really ask about this without any thoughts?

But he already finished setting up the tents and saying that he'll sleep outside in this rain was not an option. He could catch a cold.

"I'll sleep in the double tent with Lu. Will that be fine?"

“Are you sure?”

When Elesis asked with a strangely exaggerated tone, Add frowned and lowered his voice so others couldn’t hear.

“I don’t know why but Eve and Rena are wary of Lu. They are not just wary, they hate her. Nothing good will come from letting them sleep together. Also, her appearance is like a small kid....”

“But she’s probably older than anyone here. Her current form is because she became smaller.”

Why is she saying something so absurd like this right now? Add stared at Elesis confusedly when she raised her voice.

“Eve! Sleep with Add in the small tent today, okay?”

“Understood.”

“What?!”

Add got surprised and glared at Elesis. Why was she so easily burying his suggestion that he went out of his way to think up? But Elesis who was still in a bunny girl costume laughed as she patted Add’s shoulder.

“Alright, then I’ll leave it to you Add.”

“Leave what to me? What are you planning?”

Add openly expressed his frustration as he avoided Elesis’ hand. It felt like his shoulder would break if he was patted any more.

Elesis folded her arms and nodded.

“Well, we have to get Big Sister Rena and Lu to talk. Big Sister Rena should have more emotional gap than Eve. Girls talk. Will this be an acceptable reason for you?”

“.....”

It was an understandable reason but Add didn’t like it. Elesis laughed as if it wasn’t a big deal then pulled on Add’s cheek.

“Don’t worry too much. It will all work out. Also, it’s not like Eve is going to devour you.”

“It’s not because of that....”

He didn’t know what to say. Well, Elesis’ words were correct. They were all girls but Eve was a Nasod. Strictly speaking, she wasn’t a lifeform.

If someone had to sleep in the same tent as Add, Eve was a correct choice.

Add admitted Elesis' decision was reasonable. Although he didn't like it.

“.....Got it.”

Elesis scratched the back of her neck when Add answered reluctantly. It wasn't anything new, but she didn't care at all about how she was in a bunny girl outfit.

“Do you hate sleeping with Eve that much? Then do you want to sleep with me?”

“Who said I hated it? The thing between Lu and Rena, just try to take care of it.”

Add answered bluntly. Elesis smiled and turned around. Elesis was about to walk away when she turned back around as if she just remembered.

“Ah, girls will go bathe soon so you better not peep. I'll kill you half way.”

“Who would do such a useless thing?”

She was smiling but it really felt like she'd kill him half way. Elesis waved her hand to acknowledge Add's bitter answer then left. Add who was left alone turned his gaze towards far off distance.

Rain was still pouring heavily. It definitely won't let up today.

“.....It just had to rain.”

Add took a simple shower then changed into his pajamas and stayed stuck inside the tent. It wasn't because he was scared of Elesis' warning, it was because he didn't want to get any unnecessary misunderstandings.

He was trying to repair his Dynamos before he slept when Eun hopped out of his jacket that was hanging on the cloth hanger. She nimbly jumped out, stretched her arms then pitter-pattered towards Add.

Her actions were cute objectively.

“Girls are bathing so why aren't you peeping?! Come on, let us head off to an adventure together!”

.....Subjectively, she was a fox saying nonsensical things.

When Add stared at her blankly from being dumbfounded, Eun spoke as if nothing was wrong with what she said.

“Isn't it a chance to raise affection points? Hurry up and go peep.”

“.....Are you serious?”

He needed to get a kiss from someone in order to go back to his own universe and he needed to raise someone's affection points. Add was reluctant about this situation but accepted that it was necessary.

If Add couldn't go back, that meant Eun was stuck here as well. Was she really suggesting such an idea despite knowing this fully well?

"When did I ever make useless jokes to you boy? You won't be seen if you watch from on top of the tree. I'll assist in every way I can."

"How could you blatantly say that you're not making a useless joke? Maybe you're missing a liver because you're a fox?"

"I am good at taking out and eating other's livers."

Eun sat comfortably and watched Add repair.

"But Rena's breasts were very attractive even across universes. Any man would fall for...."

"Hey."

Eun shut her mouth when Add glared at her seriously. Getting angry at Eun when she was not even in Ara's body and was in a small fox form didn't feel right. Add didn't say anything more and tried to fix the Dynamos.

But Eun hadn't stopped talking.

"If you don't like Rena, isn't Elly also quite attractive? She doesn't have any extra flabs and is womanly...."

Add smashed down on the ground with his fist. It was a dirt floor so it didn't make much noise, but Add's feelings should have been conveyed clearly.

"Stop."

"....."

"I get what you're trying to say. I agree on what's needed to go back. Even so...."

He momentarily boiled up and ended up acting angrily but he couldn't explain his feelings clearly. It wasn't the first time Eun made these kinds of jokes so he didn't know why he was so angry this time.

"Don't belittle others."

"I don't understand. Wasn't boy the one who's been looking down on the El Search Party all this time?"

"....."

It was true that he changed the present multiple times using time travel and that D was him from the future. He had no way to deny Eun's indication. It made him angry, but he couldn't refute.

And he still couldn't organize how he felt.

"You don't have to belittle others. If there's a need, I'll do it myself. Also, that isn't how I do things."

"I see. So boy doesn't want to deceive and seduce women. Boy can be quite finicky at times...."

Eun continued speaking with a tone as if she was reminiscing something from long ago.

"Boy says he'll do whatever it takes to achieve his goal but never actually thinks about manipulating the El Search Party."

".....I'll end up manipulating them anyways."

He was in a situation where he had to request a kiss from someone. It was a homework that he couldn't avoid. He was delaying it only because he didn't know how to solve it, but he couldn't stay here forever.

"I know already. So stop nagging."

"It's a great chance. Isn't getting caught while peeping a great situation to confirm affection point of the girls and get evaluated by them? Of course they will get angry, but it's still better to act and bring about a change rather than staying put and doing nothing."

"I refuse."

"Don't you remember what happened in Ruben? Didn't boy obtain trust and affection from the group that time?"

"That was just me getting caught up in your scheme. I already said multiple times that I don't agree with your way of doing things."

Well, Eun's words weren't exactly wrong. Would the girls really kick Add out in this rainy night because he got caught peeping? Would they really expel him from the El Search Party?

Add also knew very well that they wouldn't.

Also, Eun was right. It was better to move and bring about a change rather than doing nothing.

But he didn't want to. Peeping itself was of course an issue..... but he didn't like this in a more substantial way.

When it seemed that Add wouldn't move, Eun sighed then hopped on some objects to jump back inside the jacket pocket.

"Tell me if you change your mind. I'll help with time travel if necessary."

“.....”

“If you want to savor multiple times, or if you want to raise affection point of someone, I’ll help with time travel much as boy wants.”

Her tone was as if Add could time travel with incomplete Dynamos with Eun’s help. Also.... it was true that raising those so called affection points wouldn’t be too hard if he used time travel.

Add didn’t know much about kissing, but everything was in the end a result of choices.

And time travel was a power that could help him reset his choices many times as he wanted. It was a power that could even kill or resurrect people, so it could probably achieve something like a kiss easily.

“.....But I don’t like it.”

His hands that have been moving restlessly stopped. Eun’s words and her methods were reasonable but it was difficult to bring himself to follow them.

He didn’t like it, but he couldn’t explain why.

“It’s not like I’m a spoiled kid.....”

If you looked at Add objectively right now, he couldn’t deny it if someone told him right now that he was a spoiled brat who kept saying ‘I don’t want to’. Of course, Eun’s suggestion wasn’t morally correct but it was also laughable for someone who had been going back and forth in time to speak about morality and ethics.

Still..... he didn’t like it.

Add kept sighing deeply when the tent door opened widely without any prior notice.

“I’m coming in, useless person.”

Person that just spoke after taking action was Eve.

Add ended up unconsciously staring straightly at Eve due to uncommon combination of her slightly wet hair and her pajama look. Eve cleanly ignored Add’s gaze while entering the tent while drying her hair with a towel.

“Ophelia.”

At Eve’s call, Ophelia appeared out of a dimension gate to set up a pillow and bedsheet then went away. Seeing how she even made her servants set up her bedding, Add unconsciously spoke out.

“Do you really have to make others do everything for you?”

“It’s something Ophelia always does. Although your Dynamos can’t.”

“.....”

From observation, this universe’s Eve was entrusting almost all petty tasks to Oberon and Ophelia. It was to the point where she entrusted them with cooking, setting up the bed and even battles.

Of course, Eve wasn’t a battle type Nasod so her developing appropriate tools and commanding them was a natural thing to do. Development purpose for Add’s Dynamos and Eve’s Ophelia weren’t too different.

“I’ll have to admit she’s amazing. How long did she take for you to make?”

“It took 10 minutes. It would have taken 50 years for you.”

“.....Hey don’t lie.”

He asked out of pure curiosity as an engineer but got a prudish response back. At Add’s criticism, Eve only moved her eyes to glare at him.

“It would have actually taken you 500 years but I took off some years. Is there a problem?”

“.....I know this is too much of a request, but I’m not Add that you know. Is there really a need to react so sharply to whatever I say?”

Add ended up saying this without realizing he did. He already knew more than enough that Add B and this Eve didn’t have a very good relationship.

“I’m suspicious if you might be fooling everyone after drinking some kind of potion that makes you younger. I wouldn’t put it past you to do such a thing.”

“I would just sell it if I could make such a potion.....”

“You would certainly go to such lengths to harass me. This would be a small scale in comparison to how you teleported an entire town to suggest that I read the map wrong.”

“.....”

Add B here must have been bit insane. Add felt dumbfounded but realized some more as to why Eve was giving him such a cold attitude. Add and Eve didn’t get along too well at the beginning in the original universe as well.....but that must have reached an entirely new level here.

“More of all, even if what you said about coming from another universe is true, I’m not Eve that you know. Don’t expect me to give same responses as her.”

“.....Well, that’s true.”

Eve looked surprised when Add willingly nodded and acknowledged. Eve was acting so surprised whenever Add made a daily life response like this. Just how much of a nincompoop was this other Add?

“I apologize if I unintentionally acted like that. Sorry.”

“.....Are you really a different person? How do you know how to apologize?”

“I had some reasons to learn.”

What he learned from Ara was proving to be useful time and time again. Eve stared half doubtfully then shook her head.

“If you’re really a different Add then I’ll apologize for a bit about my actions from before. I’m sorry. There’s no reason for you to be treated same as other Add just because you two look alike.”

“I don’t mind too much. Actually, it would be easier for me if everyone treated me as a same person.....”

Judging from how others didn’t show much reaction, the pranks(?) must have been directed only towards Eve. It was just that the extent of these pranks(?) must have been over the top. That must be why this Eve was showing hysterical reactions of being suspicious of everything Add said and distancing herself from him.

“I won’t be here for long. Just think of me as a visitor who’s passing by.”

“You said that you had to return to your universe. I don’t know much regarding this matter but Aisha said that universe travel is something that’s very difficult and dangerous. Also, according to her speculation, your universe must be in a very unstable and chaotic state.....”

“.....”

“She said that this was only possible because restraining force of your universe became weaker.”

Add nodded silently to answer Eve’s worried voice. He had skipped explanation about D, his future self but Aisha’s speculation is probably correct.

“Do you really have to risk such danger and go back?”

“.....But Add that was originally here will never return if I don’t go back.”

“He doesn’t need to come back. We’ll just not see each other forever.”

Eve spoke coldly but then made a slightly worried expression.

“.....Never mind, that seems to be too harsh of a treatment even for him.”

“I have to go back regardless. I have to go back and.....”

Add unconsciously tightened his fists.

“I’ll solve everything for sure this time and turn everything back to normal.”

“Your reason for coming to our universe, did you find a clue to defeating this person called D?”

“No, I don’t know yet. I’m thinking if leader of the demons here might know something.”

Eve nodded quietly.

“Understood. Ask me any time if there’s something I can do to help. I’ll try my best as possible.”

“That’s a completely different attitude than before.”

“It’s because I confirmed from this conversation that you are really a different Add. Which means I treated you harshly for no reason, so I have to pay back the debt.”

Eve hesitated for a moment then also added.

“Also....your curry was fairly good.”

“Thanks for the compliment.”

Eve made a hurt expression for some reason.

“.....I almost never say something like this, useless person.”

“.....”

Did the thing called affection points go down? Also, does the ‘useless’ title stay even though she acknowledged that he was a different Add?

Add changed the topic when the atmosphere inside the tent turned cold all of a sudden.

“So why are you and Rena so wary of Lu? Although Lu is a demon she’s.....”

“Isn’t it stranger to trust her?”

Eve spoke sharply.

“This case is different than Chung and Ara. Ara had her relative become a demon and Chung understood this. But Lu and Ciel are demon and her servant. Don’t you think it’s too much of an excessive request to ask someone who lost their own kind to demons to accept those two?”

Add couldn’t answer because Eve’s response was very heated.

“Demons destroyed the key to resurrecting the Nasod civilization. It was a really horrible event.... But I was alone in the first place anyways. But Rena is different.”

“.....”

“Demons brutally slaughtered Rena’s people. Asking her to trust and accept demons as comrades doesn’t make sense.”

Eve continued speaking with an unusually passionate tone. She realized Add was only listening to her and lowered her voice a bit.

“.....I don’t know much about people’s emotions and can’t understand them. But I think that Rena’s reaction is natural.”

“I see.....”

So Rena’s personality changed so drastically because she lost her people to the demons. Rena’s change was understandable now after hearing about the reason. Eve took her gaze off Add and laid down.

“I spoke too much. I’ll be sleeping now.”

Eve closed her eyes then fell asleep even before Add could respond. Nasods didn’t need to sleep but they could fall sleep right away if they wanted to.

“That was fast.....”

Add unconsciously let out a voice of admiration then lowered his gaze towards Dynamos that he was repairing. Add was examining the circuits for a bit then his gaze slowly rose up again.

Reby and Moby that were circling around Eve were also asleep.

“.....”

No, I’m guy too. Of course, it’s not like I’m going to do anything. What can human and Nasod do in the first place? He knew that being concerned about such things was crazy.... Well he was already crazy. D, his future self was also completely insane.

“Why am I like this....?”

Add who was staring straightly at sleeping Eve sighed. Add was about to turn his head away when a single word flashed by in his mind.

Core.

Eve’s core.

His heart started beating very fast all of a sudden. Why hadn't he thought of this before?

Add tried to steal Eve's core in order to go back to his own past. Everything started from there.

Then he escaped to this universe because he lacked the strength to defeat his future self. But there was also Eve here in this universe. Was this all a coincidence?

“.....Don't tell me that-”

Add stared at sleeping Eve's core as if he was mesmerized. Obtaining Eve's core and deciphering its data will drastically improve his ability to calculate time functions. That meant his ability to utilize space and shockwaves will increase as well.

Ba-dump.

He could become stronger. He can become a lot stronger by stealing this Eve's core. Eve's core will rapidly make Add stronger.

It will give Add the strength to defeat D.

“.....”

Add's eyes became cold. Even though his Dynamos were still not in their perfect state, Add had the limited time travel that Eun could perform.

There was Eve and her core in the universe that he arrived at in order to escape from D. Not only that but Eun who could help him time travel also came with him. This couldn't all be coincidence.

Everything had been arranged beforehand.

“....Let's calm down.”

Add unknowingly walked on his knees to approach Eve. He took deep breaths to calm himself down as he organized his thoughts.

I want to attack right now. He wanted to steal it.

Those guys that turned their backs on him to face D.

Just recalling their backs as they faced D made his heart tighten.

Even though they knew he was the cause of all this, they believed in him and let him escape without even a single resentment. He didn't want to let their feelings down.

He could do anything if it was for defeating D.

“....can do it.”

He can save them on the other side if he steals this Eve’s core.

He can save Eve that he had been always looking at.

“....I can do it.”

Add repeated after himself as if he was pouring courage into himself. Add took a deep breath and was stretching his hand out towards Eve but stopped midway and thought one more time.

Can I really do this? Is this the right thing to do?

“....This isn’t Eve that I know.”

Only their faces and way of speaking was alike. Their actions and thought processes were different. Eve that Add knew was cold but she acts while thinking preciously about Elsword, and her other comrades. If there is a problem, she prefers to solve it with her own hands.

She was totally not a type who tries to solve everything through her servants like this sleeping Eve here.

“....They are different.”

How they liked lemonade and things that had sour taste was the same but they were still different people. They were different Nasods. All he needed was data.

Eve that Add knows can be saved if he destroys this Eve.

“.....”

But his hand didn’t move. His hand couldn’t move because he couldn’t surpass something, some barrier in his heart. Add closed his eyes tightly and struggled, but he couldn’t surpass this something.

He came running all this way surpassing morals, ethics, time and many more but he couldn’t stretch his hand out because he couldn’t overcome this something, just this one thing.

“.....Ah.”

Add opened his eyes while sighing deplorably but then froze up. There was someone else inside the tent. Ophelia was at Eve’s bedside.

She had appeared through a dimension gate on her own before Add had realized.

“.....”

Did she see? Does she know what he was thinking? Add quickly made calculations while still frozen. If Ophelia found out, then it would be best to turn back time right now. She might start attacking.

When Add stayed frozen, a picket sign appeared on Ophelia’s hand. There were words written on the picket sign which seemed like it was summoned through a dimension gate.

Hello. I’m Ophelia. Queen Eve’s servant.

Nod. Add nodded for now and stared nervously. Ophelia summoned another picket sign and showed it to Add.

I’m in charge of Queen Eve’s night security. Pleased to meet you.

“.....Ah, okay.”

Security, that’s right. There was a security. Reby and Moby were asleep but Ophelia didn’t sleep. Add would have gotten counterattacked instead if he had tried to attack Eve carelessly.

Add sighed in relief from feeling glad that he didn’t stretch his hand out because of his inner turmoil. His back was already soaked with sweat.

Now fatigued, Add wanted to bathe in some night air so he tried to raise his body but stopped. Something was holding his hand and wasn’t letting go.

It was Eve’s hand.

Eve who had turned sideways while sleeping was holding tightly onto Add’s hand. When Add stayed frozen, Ophelia brought out a picket sign again and explained the situation.

Queen holds on to something beside her when she sleeps.

.....That's right. Didn't this also happen in Elder? Add nodded while recalling an old memory. Ophelia held up another picket sign.

That's originally my job. *Tremble*

“.....”

She must not have a voice feature. Ophelia saw that Add was blankly staring at the sign with Tremble written on it. She must have thought she was not being taken seriously so she actually trembled her body to show Add.

It looked like she was really upset.

“I can't take a night stroll like this.”

Well it was raining outside anyways. Add gave up everything and half-heartedly finished the Dynamos he was repairing with only one hand. He couldn't escape because Eve was holding on to him so tightly..... it looked like he had to go to sleep like this. Eve was sound asleep.

Looking at her peaceful expression.... made the sigh that was pent up in his heart come out.

“I'm glad....I didn't do it.”

Thinking carefully, Add had to get a kiss from someone in the El Search Party in order to go back to his original universe. But who would do such a thing for Add if he attacked Eve and stole her core?

If the clue to defeating D was core of this universe's Eve, then he should steal it after he secured a way to go back. Add unknowingly felt relieved as he closed his eyes.

He was mentally tired and fatigued. It felt like he could sleep well tonight.

Although he was holding someone's hand.

Or because he was holding her hand.



Next day morning.

Rain that poured overnight stopped and El Search Party started moving again. They crossed a river and were climbing a hill when Add who was at the back of the group frowned.

No one spoke ever since breakfast. Elesia, Lu and Rena weren't saying anything. Eve must have been wary of the three girls because she didn't open her mouth as well. So only silence dwelled amongst them.

They were heading off to fight the demons but the atmosphere between them was as if it wouldn't be strange for them fall out at any moment. Add couldn't stand it anymore so he threw a question towards Elesia who was walking ahead.

"Is it really fine to divide up our forces like this?"

Elesia answered as if she was waiting.

"We have to join up with Fire Priestess that protects the Temple of Fire, and hot springs will be a good foothold to head to the Grand Cavern. So we're going for both objectives, didn't I explain this yesterday?"

"What I mean is...."

There was no way Elesia didn't know Rena and Eve were hostile towards demons. Then wasn't it correct to divide the teams in a way where there would be no possible conflicts?

Add was frowning when Elesia suddenly started to walk backwards and walked shoulder to shoulder with Add. He looked at her blankly and she gave him a wink.

"This Add is quite considerate."

".....Don't call me in a weird way. Although there's might be no choice to."

"Then what do want me to call you? Should I call you Add 2?"

"Just call me Add, although it might feel awkward."

Elesia smiled quietly.

"Alright, I got it Add."

"So what happened with trying to get them to talk last night?"

Well, judging from this cold atmosphere where no one was talking, there was no point in checking.

"We tried to have a girls talk but girls crush happened instead."

".....So you mean they just fought."

According to Eve's explanation, Rena and Lu's relationship wasn't something that was going to improve overnight. Also, Rena and Elesis seemed to have been travelling together for quite long.

"Why did you divide the teams like this?"

One who decided the teams was Elesis, and this team placement certainly had some kind of meaning.

"Big brother Raven will lead everyone well. Elsword and Ara will take care of the front line and Aisha, Chung and Ciel will support them. I think they are quite an ideal team."

".....But teamwork on this side is a mess."

My goodness, to think there would come a day when he would speak about teamwork. Add made a very long sigh internally but the words were already spoken.

"You couldn't have divided the teams like this for no reason."

"Final battle with Scar isn't that far off. We have to work on our cooperation before then."

Add who was at a loss for words stared at Elesis because of her calm answer. Elesis laughed slightly.

They were certainly talking but weren't on the same page.

".....I didn't ask this to make you laugh. Do you think that's even possible? It looks like they are going to fight to the death at any moment."

"But I heard that laughing solves most of the problems."

Elesis said something strange then looked towards the front. More accurately, at Rena's back.

"And although Big Sister Rena might be boiling up inside, she's holding back for my sake right now. Eve is also keeping quiet because she respects Big Sister Rena's decision."

".....Don't act like girl who likes to gossip."

What was this? They were certainly heading to the demons' stronghold but the conversation that was going back and forth was like gossiping teenagers.

"Think of it as a part of membership training. Red Knights always did something like this when a new member joined."

Elesis said this then sighed.

"Just like Aisha said, it doesn't look like everything is the same even though it's a parallel universe. How was Big Sister Rena on your side?"

Did he even need to say? Add answered with whatever that came to his mind.

“She was a woman who almost never got angry, although she was scary if she did. She took care of others well. She had an overly soft-hearted personality but was outstandingly skilled. She was easy to talk to and very friendly.”

“.....That’s Big Sister Rena from before.”

When Elesis spoke as if she was recalling a long gone past, Add asked.

“As I thought, so the reason Rena changed was because of the Elf race in danger being exterminated after all?”

“Eve must have told you. Yes.”

Elesis continued to talk with a tone as if she was reminiscing about a past event.

“Big Sister Rena almost never smiled ever since that day.”

“.....Then shouldn’t you keep them separated even more? What are you planning?”

Telling someone who became so cold after experiencing her race driven almost to extinction by demons to strengthen her membership with a demon?

But Elesis let Add’s words pass and changed the topic.

“In Altera, Eve had King Nasod that was a key to resurrecting the Nasod civilization destroyed by the demons.”

“.....”

So what Eve said last night shortly must have been about this. Elesis spoke lightly as if she was sighing.

“And Elsword and I couldn’t do anything as Velder Kingdom was destroyed.”

“So Velder ended up like that.....”

After listening carefully, the situation here was much more severe than the universe Add knew.

In Add’s universe, everything could be solved if D was defeated.

The problem was that D was too powerful.... But it wasn’t like there wasn’t any hope.

But in here, everything was destroyed. Elves were at the brink of extinction, revival of the Nasod civilization was foiled and the Velder Kingdom was destroyed. Other places probably aren’t any better off.

Didn’t they say failing to stop Scar right now meant the destruction of entire Elrios?

“How strong is Scar?”

“He’s very strong. Even I almost got done in by him.”

He must be a formidable foe since even Elesis assured him. Add was overjoyed that 9 members of the El Search Party gathering was the strongest party ever..... but their enemies were also quite strong.

‘Situation here is severe as well.....’

Add swallowed a sigh then answered somewhat indifferently.

“Then we’ll have to do our best.”

“You’re not going to ask any more?”

Add closed his mouth when Elesis asked while smiling. Elesis would know better how severe the situation was than Add who was an outsider so she must have her own thoughts about dividing up the teams like this.

When Add didn’t answer, Elesis smiled vaguely as she shook her head.

“Of course, teamwork will be important in defeating Scar. Teamwork with not just you, but Lu and Ciel will be important. But that’s not all.....”

Elesis paused for a moment then spoke again.

“I want to think about what comes after as well.”

“After?”

“Everything won’t be solved even after defeating all the demons. All that remains for us after are scorched ruins.”

What Elesis was talking about was after the war, that everything won’t go back to how they were even after the war with demons ends.

“Dead won’t return and destroyed kingdom won’t rebuild itself all of a sudden.”

“.....Then what do you plan to do?”

Add had never thought about this kind of matter before. Defeat the demons then steal Eve’s core and go back to the past. This was everything for him up till now.

Elesis looked straightly ahead then spoke with a determined voice.

“We’ll still live on. We have to. Time doesn’t return after all.”

“.....”

“We can’t always hold on to what was stolen and lost. We won’t be able to move forward if we continue to cling on to the once wonderful past. Even if it’s sad, even if it’s painful..... we have to pull ourselves together and move forward.”

Although Elesis was half speaking to herself, it was painful for Add to hear what she was saying.

It was completely opposite choice from Add who chose to jump over time.

Feelings of wanting to respond and refute surged up violently but Add struggled to hold himself back.

“We might have to make peace with the demons and discuss co-existence. When that time comes...I’m worried what will happen to Eve and Big Sister Rena.”

“Is that why you divided the teams this way?”

“It won’t be easy.....but won’t they become at least a bit more closer after fighting their hearts out then bathing together in the hot springs?”

Add had to say something because he was in awe by her questioning tone.

“Of course not. If it was something that easy to solve then it would have been solved last night already.”

“Yes, you’re right.....but I don’t want to just sit back and watch. Even if it might be useless, I want to do something, anything I can for them.”

“.....”

“Because we’re all comrades.”

Add couldn’t speak as he looked at Elesis who was looking strongly determined. There were so many ways for him to point out and refute her logically but he couldn’t. Doing such a thing would be empty.

She was so upright, righteous and blinding. How she already made up her mind, chose her path and paved the way with her sword looked truly beautiful.

“.....You are still the same.”

“Come to think of it, you said I was in your universe as well right? How was I there?”

“.....”

You came in flying like the wind and tried to chop off my head. In that moment, Rena who was walking ahead stopped walking and gave a hand signal.

Enemies were spotted.

El Search Party lied down flat on the ground and poked only their heads out to observe the situation over the hill.

Their enemies were mermaids. Rena counted their numbers and signalled with her hand. Twelve. They were bit far off but could be taken care of easily.

“Add, can you hold your breath for a bit?”

“What?”

Add was thinking Elesis had something in mind but then got surprised when his body suddenly got lifted up. No, his body was flying.

“Uwaaaaaaah?!”

Add who suddenly ended up flying quickly used his Dynamos to land safely. He had cold sweats and dizzy vision. It felt like he flew across about 20 meters.

His heart was beating rapidly almost to the point where it was going to burst out of his chest. Add was turning around to protest but paused. Mermaids were staring at him blankly.

So he held his breath then got thrown into middle of enemies. Add was shocked but was still preparing the attack formulas when a voice came from behind him.

“Ah, don’t do that.”

Elesis frowned as she stopped Add. She didn’t just throw him, she also followed after throwing him.

“.....Don’t do things like this from now on.”

Was she planning to draw their attention towards Add then clean them up after? Add anticipated Elesis could immediately clean up the situation so he stopped activating the Dynamos. Elesis didn’t answer right away then strangely trailed her words.

“Hmm, I’ll think about it....”

Elesis said this then held her sword backwards. Holding a giant sword backwards, was there an attack method like that? Add forgot that he was in middle of enemy lines and observed intriguingly. Watching how this Elesis fought might help him when he goes back.....

Elesis spoke towards the mermaids that were extremely guarded due to human male and female appearing one after another all of a sudden.

“We came to surrender. Here you go.”

“.....”

It wasn’t just words, she was handing over her sword. It was a voluntary disarmament. Add blinked blankly at this scene that he hadn’t even imagined.

Mermaids that were also blinking came to their senses and quickly grabbed the weapon.

“Surrender?”

“Who are you?”

“You should all know about Elesis right? Here, take us.”

Add’s head became numb as he pressed on his forehead. It won’t even be a warmup for Elesis to swing her sword and clean up these mermaids. But she was disarming herself and surrendering?

Mermaids exchanged gazes with each other then stared sharply at the hill where Add and Elesis came down from.

“There might be more hiding. Go take a look!”

Four of them headed to the hill and the rest took out ropes and tightly bound Elesis’ wrists. Then they approached Add to bind his wrists as well.

“.....Hah.”

Ah, I’m really at a loss for words. Add dropped an empty laugh but still let them tie him up. He could always untie them long as he had the Dynamos.

Elesis must be doing this because she has some kind of plan.

“Explain properly later.”

“You’ll see.”

Elesis grinned in response. Add was displeasingly looking at the rope tying his wrist when mermaids that went up the hill returned.

“There was no one up there.”

“I think there are only these two.”

Rena, Eve and Lu must have realized the situation and hidden themselves quickly. Elesis grinned when a mermaid glared at her suspiciously.

“It’s tiresome to just stand here. Can you take us away quickly?”

“.....We’ll take them to the Queen for now. Take them away!”

Five mermaids surrounded Add and Elesis and started to walk. After being surrounded by enemies, Add sighed in frustration. Unlike Elesis' sword, Add's Dynamos must have not been conceived as a weapon so they didn't get confiscated.

Elesis must have read Add's discomfort because she opened her mouth.

"Enemies in the Ash Covered Village were a bit strange. Enemies weren't demons and they returned to normal after the fight."

She meant that this could be the same case.

"I think there must be some other reason. It would be better to talk to their leader directly."

".....And is there any assurance that we'll be safe through that process?"

Even Add himself could take care of the situation right now but it was a different story if they were taken to the enemy base. Elesis even gave up her sword.

"They won't be able to harm me. Scar has me marked. Maybe I might get dragged right in front of Scar like this."

".....What about me?"

"Well.....you'll probably be okay?"

What do you mean by probably? Add sighed from being caught up in Elesis' unexpected action.

Then Elesis intrepidly hit Add's back repeatedly.

"Don't be so scared. I'll protect you. Don't worry!"

"Ow, it hurts. It hurts!"

Add frowned and was about to dodge Elesis' hands but paused. Mermaids that were escorting them also looked back from a large noise and opened their eyes widely from surprise.

"Rope got untied!"

"How did she break free?!"

When mermaids raised their weapons in caution, Elesis looked down at the snapped rope and made a troubled smile.

"Ah, it must have been an old rope. Can you tie me up tightly with a new one?"

"....."

"Please."

Elesis stretched out her wrists while smiling. Like a predator that was saying I might devour you all if you don't tie me up quickly.

Above the hill.

Eve who was watching Add and Elesis be captured and get escorted away opened her mouth.

“Wouldn’t it be better to save them right now?”

“.....Elesis won’t do something like this without any thoughts. We did feel something was off when we fought in the Ash Covered Village.”

Rena sighed as she shook her head.

“I think she was trying to find out the reason for that..... she should have at least told us something.”

Amongst the El Search Party, Rena and Elesis had fought together and cooperated with each other in battles the longest. Elesis as the Red Knights captain and Rena as the leader of the Elf Assassination unit.

So they could grasp what each other was thinking without any words.

“So then what should we do now? Decide quickly.”

Rena closed her mouth at Lu’s words. Trying to talk.....made her emotions surge up and disoriented her thoughts.

Rena suppressed her twisting emotions and responded. This wasn’t the time to waste emotions on Lu.

“Let’s approach the hot springs without being seen and observe the situation. We can save Elesis and Add if they are in danger.”

“I got it. Please lead us there if you know this area well.”

“.....”

To stop the extinction of the Elves, Rena learned recognising geographical features, stealth and methods to attack enemies with traps. She was also skilled in infiltration. Elesis must have trusted Rena’s skills and that must be why Elesis even disarmed herself and got captured on purpose.

When Rena wordlessly stood up, Lu narrowed her eyes.

“You must not like me quite a bit.”

“.....That’s right.”

Keep the conversation to minimum. Rena answered coldly then was about to turn around but Lu wasn't done talking.

"I can understand why you don't like me. No, saying that I understand would be deceiving myself. It is true that demons invaded Elrios and caused countless amount of bloodshed, even though I lost my power and was dethroned, I'm still a demon. I don't have any intention to deny this."

"So?"

Rena's hand was grabbing her sword hilt. There was a limit to her suppressing her emotions.

She held back last night but she wasn't confident that she will be able do so today.

"I don't have any intention to say that I'm different from the other demons and avoid all the resentments. Doing so would be a reasonable choice....but its cowardly. Rather, I'll welcome it as a lord of the Demon Realm."

".....What a thing to say when I'm holding back here. Want me to fix your attitude?"

Rena's face became even colder. Outstanding beauty was giving off such a cold aura but Lu still kept her composure.

"If you want to take your anger out on me, I'll allow it. Come, beautiful Elf."

"Rena, this isn't the time."

Eve tried to dissuade Rena but Lu refused instead.

"I refuse to put up with this false trust and false bonds any longer. If you resent me, if you want to kill me because I'm a demon, then come at me with an intention of killing me!"

"Stay back, Eve."

Rena spoke sternly then turned her body towards Lu. Lu created giant magical gauntlets with her powers while smiling.

"Try your best. You might die otherwise."

".....That's my line."

Rena also drew her sword.

4. Entangled Feelings

Hot springs prison.

It was a place where Add and Elesis was being held.

“They didn’t even leave any guards. What are they thinking?”

“It seems strange after all right?”

Despite being imprisoned, Elesis was lying down with her legs stretched. Her ropes were already snapped off and she was looking up at the ceiling with her hands behind her head.

Add saw this and also used the Dynamos to burn off the ropes tying his wrist. It seemed he got caught up by Elesis’ abrupt actions so he needed to organize his goals for a bit.

Steal the core of this place’s Eve in order to defeat D. But that was something he should do at the very end. He needed to get an El Search Party’s kiss in order to go back to his own universe.

He didn’t know how to raise the thing called affection points, but he had no choice but to try various things.

‘Eve should be fine at least.....’

If this universe’s Eve were to be destroyed, then he had to turn back time. Time travel was his trump card, Add confirmed Eun sleeping inside his jacket pocket then turned his gaze towards Elesis.

“So why did we get captured on purpose? You could clean up this entire hot springs by yourself.”

Elesis shook her head from side to side slightly.

“Seirena, ruler of these geysers was very friendly towards humans before. She let people of Lanox use the hot springs freely and facilitated trades. But she suddenly became hostile towards humans when the demon invasion started.”

“And you’re going to figure out why? What if she just joined the demons because they seemed stronger?”

“Then we should show her who’s stronger.”

Elesis spoke confidently despite how she was imprisoned inside the enemy base. But she wasn’t bluffing.

Elesis never said empty words. If she says she’ll do something, then she will.

“But that doesn’t seem to be the case..... Something feels off.”

“Well, fine. Then shall we escape and find out?”

Add had the Dynamos so he could escape this prison any time he wanted. Add was standing up when Elesis opened her eyes widely.

“We can’t. We have to quietly wait here until Big Sister Rena, Eve and Lu comes to save us.”

“Could it be that....we got captured on purpose for that reason?”

“I also wanted to talk directly with Seirena.”

But her tone was as if that wasn’t everything. It meant that she wanted Rena and Lu to cooperate and come to save Add and Elesis.

“They weren’t even talking to each other before so will they really cooperate to save us? Maybe if they act separately....”

“What are you talking about? Big Sister Rena and Lu should be seriously fighting each other by now.”

“.....”

Is this girl a pancake? She keeps flipping over her own words. Add was at a loss for words but Elesis spoke clearly.

“The reason why Big Sister Rena hadn’t revealed her feelings regarding Lu and Ciel so far was out of respect for me. But I’m gone now and Add who could have stopped her is also gone.... and Lu is very prideful so she’d probably incite the fight instead. They should be having a huge fight right now.”

“Why did you do something like this?”

Although Lu and Elesis had fought fiercely before, that fight didn’t have any emotions attached to it. Although the Velder Kingdom was destroyed because of the demons, Elesis didn’t treat Lu out of spite because of that event.

She was shockingly clean and firm.

It would be obvious for any normal person to have lingering feelings and grudges but Elesis had concluded that this and that were separate matters. Even though the demon invasion had taken countless lives, she accepted Lu as her comrade.

It was a reasonable and rational decision but not everyone could act like Elesis.

“.....Rather, Rena’s reaction is more normal. Why did you get captured on purpose when you knew that this would happen?”

And the reason she brought Add along was because he would obviously stop them if he stayed behind? She was completely intending to make those two fight.

Seeing that Elesis was keeping quiet, Add continued to question her.

“Lu and Ciel are very good addition to our forces. They are very powerful and should also have information about the demons. I admit that they have to be accepted. But why did you leave Lu with Rena and Eve when those two can’t look at demons so kindly? You didn’t just put them together. You even went out of your way to create a stage for them to clash.”

“Is that what you think?”

“If you didn’t want such things to happen then you should have at least given some words to Rena before you left. Even if it wasn’t a direct suggestion to not fight, you had to at least give her some caution.”

Add shook his head from side to side.

“What you said before, that people have to live on even if this war ends, that they have to learn how to co-exist with demons. Those words themselves are beautiful, they are the ideal words. But not everyone can be like that. They can’t just settle their feelings so firm and cleanly like you.”

“.....”

“Just what did you expect? That after Lu and Rena fight each other, they’ll throw away all their negative feelings and grow their companionship? If that’s what you really thought then you have a horrible taste, it’s an excessive expectation.”

Elesis who was listening to Add’s heated criticism smiled.

“You’re saying lots of cool things today Add. I’m happy to see that you have become so passionate when it’s not even in front of Eve.”

“Don’t mock me. Also, comparing me to other Add can’t be helped, but don’t try to change the topic.”

“No, it’s because I’m really happy. To worry so much about others and become so fired up about it. It’s really amazing.”

Add closed his mouth when Elesis lay on her stomach and quietly smiled while resting her chin on her hands.It was true that he got unusually fired up. This wouldn’t have happened if he didn’t get caught up by Elesis and got dragged here.

Elesis, she was troublesome to deal with both in this and another universe.

Add was clicking his tongue when Elesis stood up and abruptly pushed her face close to Add’s. Add pulled his upper body backwards in surprise from the sudden lack of distance.

“Taming Lu while cooking yesterday also... you’re unexpectedly sentimental. Since when did you become like this?”

“.....You also ate them too.”

Who was it that ate all the ingredients? Elesis scratched her head with an expression as if she was saying ‘oh yea that happened too~’, then changed the topic.

“How are things going in your universe? I’m a bit curious.”

“I told you not to change the topic.”

“I’ll tell you if you tell me. Come on, go ahead.”

Add frowned when Elesis sat down and spoke while holding out her hand.

“9 of us didn’t even all gather there.”

“But judging from what you said, you seemed to know everyone except Lu and Ciel. What happened?”

“.....You and Raven turned to the demons’ side. You two are enemies of the El Search Party.”

Unexpectedly, Elesis didn’t show any particular signs of being surprised.

“Really? So that’s why you’re so reluctant of me. Figures....”

“You must not believe me or it must not feel all that real for you.”

“Of course it doesn’t feel real. We’re different people in the end. Although I guess you can’t completely deny that we’re different.....”

Elesis let the topic slide then asked again with an expression as if she forgot something really important.

“So? What happened to Elsword?”

“He grew up exponentially. He’s El Search Party’s current.....”

Add pondered on what he should say for a moment then spoke without realizing he did.

“Leader.”

It was by Elsword’s decision that everyone faced D despite knowing the consequences so that Add could escape. No other word was more fitting considering his determination and ability to act in that moment.

“Yes, that’s my brother for you. Magnificent.”

Elesis was overjoyed and smacked her knee. Add had never seen Elesis react so gladly so he asked.

“Does it make you that happy?”

“Of course. What can be happier than hearing that your brother grew up? I’d like to have a party if we have the time. Should I give him a hug when I see him next time?”

Add sighed from seeing Elesis make such a fuss.

“Elsword I’m talking about isn’t Elsword you know.”

“Why does that matter?”

“.....What?”

Elesis spoke as if it was no big deal.

“Aisha said that parallel universes are different possibilities. I don’t know why but I think that it might be somehow possible for me to join the demons and become an enemy of the El Search Party. Although it will be difficult for me to apologize to you properly even if you reprimand me about it.”

“What’s your point?”

“That Elsword still has more room for growth. Although we’ll have to keep this a secret from Elsword since it’s not very subtle.”

Just like she said, it wasn’t subtle. Elesis spoke clearly.

“The reason you wanted to be with us was because we were your comrades also back in the place you were in right? You did this even though you knew that we were different from people you knew.”

“.....”

“Even though universes are different, our wills are connected.”

It was a random thing for her to say but Add gave up trying to refute. It looked like Elesis had already made up her mind so it didn’t feel like she’d listen to him no matter how much he talked.

And there was also a part that he couldn’t completely deny.

“Anyways, lets return to what we were talking about before. Why did you put Lu and Rena....”

Add was trying to return to the original topic but frowned. Steps coming up to their prison cell was heard. Elesis noticed too and got up.

“Sorry but let’s talk about that again later.”

Elesis and Add exited the prison and headed to the hot springs palace while being surrounded by mermaids. Mermaids were startled when they saw Add and Elesis had untied their ropes but it looked like they had accepted that trying to bind them was useless.

“Where are we going?”

“They’re obviously guiding us to Seirena, ruler of these hot springs right?”

When Elesis asked the mermaids forwardly, they frowned and didn’t say anything.

“It must be true since they aren’t answering.”

“Silence, human! Stop talking or else!”

“I’m sorry but I’ll have to talk a bit more. Why did your people suddenly become hostile towards humans? I heard that your people were in friendly terms with people of Lanox not too long ago.”

When her warning got ignored, mermaid swung her spear angrily at Elesis’ head. But Elesis easily grabbed the spear’s shaft.

She had grabbed the spear mermaid swung at full strength as if she was grabbing a chopstick.

“I asked you a question, you should answer.”

“.....”

Mermaid tried to pull back her spear with a surprised expression but it was useless. The spear Elesis was grabbing lightly with just one hand didn’t even budge no matter how much mermaid struggled to pull it out.

Other mermaids realized the situation and they all pointed their spears towards Elesis. But Elesis remained calm.

“We’re talking right now. I’m not trying to pick a fight so answer me.”

“Ugh! Kugh!”

“I’ll let go if you answer.”

Elesis spoke soft but sternly while looking at the mermaid. Mermaid who was struggling to pull her spear back looked around at her comrades as if she didn’t know what to do.

Mermaid was at a loss for options so she spat out an answer while scowling.

“Everything is decided by our Queen.”

“I see, so Seirena decided.....”

Elesis trailed her words then let go of the spear. Mermaid didn't expect the spear to be let go all of a sudden so she fell backwards. Then Elesis confidently started to walk forwards. Mermaids that were on guard got surprised and quickly followed after her but Elesis' steps were too fast.

Add asked after catching up to Elesis with Dynamo's flight.

"Where are you going?"

"To meet Seirena."

"Do you know where she is?"

"I already memorized the terrain while we were being led here."

Just like she said, Elesis didn't hesitate in any crossroads. Mermaids that should have been escorting Add and Elesis followed them hastily but they couldn't catch up to the two because they were too fast.

If Elesis and Add tried to escape, they could send a signal to bring in more troops. But the place where the two of them were heading was Seirena's palace. So they couldn't decide on their actions and were just hastily trying to catch up to the two of them.

".....This is absurd."

Elesis moved about inside the enemy base as if it was her own house and enemies couldn't even lay a finger on her. Add who also had high mobility could do the same thing if he wanted to.

But Elesis' attitude was different.

Elesis was walking up the stairs boldly, and mermaids were hastily following her. It almost looked like Elesis was the queen and mermaids were her vassals.

Elesis slightly turned her head to look at Add then grinned.

"You must have liked it."

".....Hmph."

Elesis laughed from hearing Add's snort then continued moving. Stairs ended then a wide open area appeared.

Many mermaids were standing in lines left and right and a particularly beautiful mermaid was sitting on a throne. No introductions were needed to tell that this was Seirena, the ruler of these hot springs.

We might have to fight. Add was preparing as they approached Seirena but Elesis spoke as if she just remembered.

“Come to think of it.....It seems Seirena likes handsome males.”

“What?”

“Wouldn’t Add be just fine?”

Hey, what are you talking about? Add was about to question her from having an ominous feeling but Elesis was already approaching Seirena.

Elesis stopped at a distance where they could talk to each other. It was just the right amount of distance where she would be stopped by mermaids around Seirena if she took even one more step further. It was a perfect judgement of distance.

Elesis met Seirena’s eyes then payed her respects.

“Hello, Seirena. I’m El Search Party’s Elesis.”

“.....Captain of the now gone Velder Kingdom’s Red Knights. I did hear about you.”

Seirena nodded with a reluctant expression then accepted Elesis’ greeting.

“I’m Seirena.”

“Then shall we start talking?”

Add stood beside Elesis. Then mermaids that should have been escorting Elesis and Add finally came up the stairs and tried to surround the two of them. Seirena frowned as she waved her hand.

Mermaids that were out of breath and close to fainting bowed then scattered to the sides.

“It seems my servants aren’t enough to stop you.”

“Thanks for the compliment, we didn’t come here to fight for no reason. We came to talk.”

“Then speak, I’ll listen for now.”

Seirena looked apathetic. Elesis didn’t mind Seirena’s expression and demanded one-sidedly.

“I’d like you to stand on the side of humans and help us defeat the demons. If Scar revives the demon god, Elrios that’s already in so much turmoil will be completely destroyed. He must be stopped.”

“I refused that request already long ago. I also don’t plan on letting you through this place.”

“Really? Then what are you planning to do if the demon god revives? Elrios will be destroyed, do you think this hot springs will be safe?”

“That’s.....”

Seirena pressed her hand on her forehead then frowned. Elesis shook her head exaggeratedly then spoke with a regrettable tone.

“Alright, fine. But I came with a fresh new offer this time. Decide after you listen to it.”

So we’ll have to fight if this offer doesn’t work out? But something ridiculous came into Add’s ears while he was preparing the space coordinates.

“If you help us, Add will remain here and be your servant.”

“.....What?”

Add got surprised from hearing such endless and bottomless words that he turned around to look at Elesis. Elesis nonchalantly continued talking.

“How about it? Isn’t it a great condition?”

“Hey, what are you.....”

Add was at a loss for words. Seirena made a long sigh.

“Hmm, he’s quite.....”

“.....”

Add didn’t know how to react when Seirena stared at him intensely. It was his first time receiving such an intense gaze that he just wanted to avoid it soon as possible.

“He’s fine.Alright.”

“Really? Then you’ll help us right?”

Was she going to buy their trust by selling him out? Soon as Add realized Elesis’ intentions, his head boiled up immediately. No, she could just stomp down on them with force then make them listen. What was she doing?

Not only did Add dislike her method.....what Elesis said made him angry, frustrated, dumbfounded, And sad.

Add was clenching his fists tightly when Seirena shook her head.

“But I can’t betray General Scar.....”

“Does he not suit your tastes?”

Elesis leisurely continued the conversation. Add stretched out his hand to grab Elesis’ shoulder. It was difficult for him to resist punching her face.

“What the heck are you doing?”

“Weren’t you listening?”

Add fumed up when Elesis spoke casually.

“I already researched Seirena’s preferences. Actually, Ciel was the most appropriate but it didn’t seem that would work because of Lu, so the next up in line was you.”

“Are you telling me to cooperate with something this stupid? You’re going to hand me over to them?”

“Do you have a problem with that?”

Add’s patience snapped when Elesis still remained casual.

Add’s fist flew towards Elesis’ face without him realizing his action, but Elesis easily grabbed Add’s fist as if she was handling a child’s temper tantrum.

“You’ll get hurt if you punch like this. I’ll teach you a better form next time.”

“Don’t mess with me!”

Dynamics answered to Add’s rage and gave off electric currents.

They were in the middle of enemy’s base and in front of enemy’s leader. Add should obviously restrain himself even if he had things he wanted to say and do. He had wait for a next chance. Elesis might be doing this because she had some other intentions. Fighting here would be just fighting amongst allies. It won’t be of any help.

He knew all of those. He knew.... But he couldn’t suppress his rage.

“Haha.....”

Elesis made a strange bitter smile when she saw how enraged Add was.

Leisurely smile, but no matter how strong Elesis was, she was barehanded right now. Will she be able to handle Add who was filled to the brim with rage?

Add was about to act without thinking about the consequences when..... Seirena groaned.

“I can’t betray General Scar.....”

“There.”

Elesis ignored Add who was about to attack her then turned her gaze towards Seirena. Elesis’ face looked serious unlike before.

“Get ready, Add.”

“What?”

Add answered in reflex even while still furious, and in the moment when he was regretting that he answered..... geyser burst up from the ground.

Hail of Rena’s arrows chased after Lu. Lu jumped to hide behind a rock then jumped again by stepping on magic circles to dodge the incoming arrows.

“It’s my turn now!!”

Lu kicked the ground as she lowered her stance then charged while swinging her gauntlets. It looked like she was just pushing with a brute force, but not only was Lu’s body quite small.... her strength was incomparably huge!

Rena acknowledged she had no chance if she faced Lu’s attack head on so she backed out and responded by slanting her sword in a perfect angle to let Lu’s fists graze by.

“Ooh! You’re quite skilled!!”

“Don’t take me lightly!!”

Rena swung her sword upwards to deflect Lu’s fist then immediately threw a kick. It was a miraculous kick mixed in amongst sword strikes, Lu exclaimed then blocked the kick with her gauntlet but a sword strike flew towards her right after. Lu backed out while blocking each kicks and swords strikes of Rena’s combination attack.

It was a quite breathtaking exchange of offense and defense but Lu’s face didn’t show any tension and only held a grin. On the other hand, Rena’s face was filled with rage. Unlike her usual cold self, she became even more enraged as she fought.

Not losing one’s cool during a fight was basic of basics. But Rena was ignoring this basic rule and letting rage burn up her entire body.

“Alright, fine. Try some more, beautiful Elf!”

Lu was blocking all of Rena’s attacks and evaluating each one of them as if she was inciting Rena to continue. Lu was speaking out because she was honestly impressed.....but her words would only sound like mockery in the attacker’s perspective.

Detestable demon that drove her race to the brink of extermination was blocking all her attacks and even praising her.

You wouldn’t be a person if you didn’t get angry. Rena’s sword strikes became even faster.

“Rena!”

Eve who was looking from afar noticed Rena’s state and called out but her voice didn’t reach Rena’s ears. It wasn’t like Rena who was always cool to let this fight happen in the first place.

“.....Also there’s some error in saying that she was always cool.”

Eve also knew Rena before her personality had changed. How warm, kind, friendly and thoughtful she was towards everyone.

But after demons hunted down the Elves. How they not only fought the Elves but massacred even the civilians, such acts couldn’t be described as anything else but a hunt. Rena became a completely different person after witnessing deaths of her people and her village burn to ashes.

And the emotions she had kept suppressed all this time was coming up to the surface as she fought Lu now.

“.....Although I don’t know about emotions.”

But Eve knew about fights. If this goes on, one of Lu or Rena will get critically injured or even die. But timing to stop them didn’t reveal itself so easily.

“Just why did Elesis.....”

Eve continued to stare restlessly but the fight was becoming even more fierce. Rena spun around to deflect all of Lu’s soul strikes with her sword then twirled her sword around in place as she fixed her stance.

Rena was determined to finish this in a close quarter combat. Lu clashed her two gauntlets loudly while smiling.

“Alright, come at me!”

Rena jumped in with a slide as she swung her sword. It was an attack putting into account Lu had a small stature. But Lu read this beforehand and jumped up high to dodge Rena’s attack. Lu summoned a magic circle in midair to step on it then charged downwards.

“Try taking this on!!”

“.....”

Usual Rena would have obviously dodged then counterattacked, but she didn’t have such intentions right now. Lu who even had the force of the magic circle behind her attack as she threw her entire body like a bullet and Rena who was trying to hit Lu’s attack back directly. It was a moment where the fight was going to be decided.

Just when their full powered attacks were about to clash.....

Clank! Crack!

A strange sound rang out. It was a bizarre sound to be considered person's flesh tearing or blood spurting out. Rena and Lu looked at the result then paused.

Oberon's body was crumpled after taking their attacks from both sides. Even though he had definitely made a defensive stance, his head was crushed and half of his waist had been torn off.

“.....So you can at least stop them this way.”

Eve slowly withdrew her hand then evaluated coldly. Oberon who took Rena and Lu's attacks staggered then collapsed.

Eve looked at him then evaluated composedly.

“Good work, Oberon. I'll fix you up later so go back for now.”

Oberon wasn't moving even after being given an order. Eve recognised that he was literally shattered and couldn't move so she called Ophelia to send Oberon back.

After having their heated fight intervened by Eve, Rena and Lu had stopped and were catching their breaths.

But judging by their still riled up expressions, it looked like throwing even a single pebble towards their direction would get them back into trying to kill each other.

“You're going too far, Rena.”

Rena who was breathing heavily turned to glance slightly at Eve. Eve spoke composedly while staring at Rena who still looked furious.

“I won't say that I know how you feel. I don't know about emotions anyways. But what will you say to Elesis if you kill Lu like this?”

“.....”

“There's no way I'd die from something like this so that's a needless worry.”

Lu was also breathing heavily while smacking her lips. She looked like an excited child stomping her feet after being isolated in a room.

“And you.....”

Eve was bit hesitant but spoke out. Rena couldn't say it so she had to instead.

“Lu, what do you think you're doing by provoking Rena? There shouldn't be anything good for you even if you win or lose here.”

“It’s my policy to not avoid fights!”

“.....There will be a need to adjust that policy. At least inside the El Search Party.”

Eve replied coldly then closed her eyes. She had never imagined she’d be in charge of the mediating role like this, but there was no other choice.

“Try talking to each other for just 5 minutes. I won’t stop you two if you still want to fight after that.”

Oberon had literally thrown away his entire body to cool this fight down and Rena and Lu had stopped out of respect for Eve’s decision. If the two of them decided to fight again, there was no way Eve could stop them.

Rena and Lu wordlessly accepted Eve’s request then looked at each other. Some time passed, but Rena didn’t say anything as if she was regretting letting her anger get to her head.

One who opened their mouth first was Lu.

“Like I said before, you can blame me, you can hate me. It’s obvious for you to demand why didn’t you stop your race from running rampant? What have you been doing all this time and is trying to stop the demons now? It’s not just you, there will be many more who will demand the same things from me.”

“.....”

“Tell me beautiful Elf, is my head that desirable? Will obtaining my head allow you to let go of your grudge against the demons and forgive them? Will you have completed your vengeance then?”

Rena bit down hard on her lips.

“Stop saying such nonsense. I won’t ever forgive.....”

“Yes, it’s fine if you don’t forgive. Don’t forgive. I don’t have any intention to ask for forgiveness!”

Lu spoke boldly. Rena unknowingly grabbed her sword again at this overly brazen response.

“No matter how much I ask for forgiveness, will that even reach the hearts of you and your people? Such thing isn’t possible. Lost families, destroyed homes won’t come back as how they were. Time is cruel to everyone. No amount of hatred can turn it back.”

“.....”

“You can hate me, you can loathe me. I’m already prepared for it. But....even so, I won’t let myself be beaten so easily! I won’t ask for forgiveness, bow by head, apologize with tears or lay down my life to appease the souls of the dead!”

Lu looked straightly at Rena. She already made her decision.

“This is because I know that such empty apologies and regrets without any sincerity won’t bring about anything. Even still, I cannot let myself be killed so easily. It might have been different before, but I now have a soul companion who’s more precious to me than anything else. So even if the voices of hatred towards me fills the earth, I won’t let myself be beaten so easily.”

“Then what are you planning to do?”

Lu’s voice didn’t waver despite hearing Rena’s voice that was filled with resentment.

“If there are any wrongs that my race has committed, then I’ll carry them all upon myself to solve everything completely once and for all. This is my decision as lord of the Demon Realm.”

“.....”

“So yes, your rage is just, it’s correct. Detest me.”

Rena bit her lips and didn’t say anything for a while. As Eve stared quietly, a cold wind blew by and Rena slowly turned around.

“.....I’ll go save Elesia for now.”

“Yes, I got it. Let’s go together.”

“.....”

Rena didn’t answer but it seemed she acknowledged Lu accompanying her. Eve finally relaxed and slowly followed the two of them.

She had somehow managed to stitch things up for now, but she was unsure of what might happen next time. She should consult others about this.....

But let’s first handle the situation at hand.

“Elesia wouldn’t get hurt but that useless person is.....”

Eve spoke to herself worriedly then hastened her steps.

Ground shattered suddenly and pillars of water shot up towards the sky. Mermaids screamed and scattered everywhere but not all of them could dodge the water.

“Kyaaaaaah!!”

“Y, your highness!!?”

Water pillars had risen up in ten places already and it didn't seem like they were going to stop. Water was so hot that you could feel the heat from far away. Maybe mermaids might be okay after getting hit by it, but there was no guarantee of humans surviving it.

Add noticed the danger and prepared the Dynamos for flight, and Elesis skillfully stuck close to Add's back and tied her arms around his neck.

"Let's go!?"

She was speaking so shamelessly but he couldn't leave her behind. Add muttered as he quickly raised the altitude. He focused on dodging the water pillars by moving from side to side but Dynamo was originally a 1 seater, and he could only use 4 right now.

"Ah, this feels nice. Will you give me a ride on this time to time from now on?"

"I'll drop you if you say something stupid one more time."

Add gritted his teeth and spoke angrily but Elesis even ordered Add with a tone as if she didn't care.

"Ah, you can't go right, turn left, go straight!"

"...."

Add didn't know how Elesis did it, but the geysers rose up just like she said. Add was currently barely managing to dodge the geysers because he had to mobilize the Dynamos that were creaking as if they were going to fall apart at any moment.

"Are we just going to keep dodging like this? What's your next plan?"

"....You must have been really angry."

What Elesis said with a bitter smile wasn't a proper answer but it was an explanation that Add wanted.

He couldn't see Elesis' face but she was indeed feeling sorry.

"I'm sorry, I tested you a bit."

"About what?"

"If you can be really trusted."

Elesis telling Seirena that she'll hand Add over to her wasn't because she really was going to, it was to see Add's reaction.

".....What a nasty personality."

He was beginning to understand what kind of girl Elesis was.

She was bold and feisty no matter what happened and acted first, but it wasn't like she didn't think. She was a type that solved matters through a powerful force and ability to adapt to circumstances.

It was admirable.....but it still made Add angry. There was no way one would feel joyful about being put on a scale.

"So did I pass your test? Am I to your liking?"

".....Ah, you're really angry. I'm sorry. This won't happen ever again."

Elesis apologized once more as she rubbed her cheek against Add's. He couldn't understand what kind of apology this was.....and he could feel warmth transferring from her cheek that was touching his.

Continuing to be angry was difficult when she was apologizing repeatedly and this wasn't the situation to worry about such things.

"I won't forgive you.... if you do something like this one more time."

"Yes, I'll be careful."

"....."

Despite still feeling very hurt about what happened, Add suppressed his feelings and turned back to the reality at hand. Geysers were still rising up and threatening the Dynamos. Not just the Dynamos, but his life would be at risk if he were to dodge even a second late.

"It probably wasn't just me you were testing...."

Add turned widely in an arc to face Seirena. Seirena who was standing in the middle of dozens of geysers was glaring at them.

"Me and that mermaid, you tested both of us at the same time right?"

"Yes."

Elesis readily acknowledged. Seirena who was talking normally with Elesis suddenly lost her mind. These geysers were Seirena's attacks, she was attacking the two of them without any regards to safety of her servants.

She was completely out of it.

"Then hurry up and take care of it."

Seirena had a powerful ability to manipulate the geysers however she liked, but Elesis probably could deal with her without much difficulty.

But Elesis confessed with a troubled tone.

“Ah, but I don’t have my sword.”

“.....There won’t be any time to go find it. Should we run away?”

Add also couldn’t activate all 6 of his Dynamos right now so performing flight and attack at the same time was difficult. Not only that, but he was also carrying an extra weight called Elesis.

“No, retreating right now will make the situation more complicated. Let’s take care of this with just the two of us.”

“How?”

An absurd answer returned to Add who asked somewhat expectantly.

“Throw me towards Seirena.”

“What?”

“Charge!”

Add didn’t have any chance to question Elesis because she tightened her arms around Add’s neck even more. Seirena must have realized that she couldn’t catch the two of them with only geysers so she had summoned 4 giant water bubbles. These bubbles were so huge that each of them could fit at least 4 people.

It won’t be easy to dodge them. But Elesis shouted energetically.

“Don’t get scared and charge, Add!”

“Damn it! Don’t treat me like a horse!”

Add trusted that Elesis had some kind of plan so he started to fly directly forwards. Seirena’s bubbles flew in towards them.

Add’s Dynamos quickly flew upwards to dodge the bubbles. Performing such a maneuver would normally make the passenger hanging on fall off but Elesis endured without making a sound.

“Fine, I’ll do as you asked!”

Add shouted then started to fall towards Seirena. It was a sudden drop much faster than how he flew up before. It wasn’t a speed that the bubbles chasing them could catch up to.

He could see Seirena looking up at the two of them with a surprised face.

“Haaah!!”

Elesis who measured her timing let go of her arms around Add’s neck then fell downwards. It was a sudden drop with even force of gravity added!

Seirena saw Elesis falling on top of her head and quickly waved her spear but Elesis easily deflected the spear away by waving her arm.

She then clenched her right fist tightly.

“Take this....and come to your senses!”

Elesis dropped down her fist with all her strength on Seirena’s head.

Baaaaam!!

A terrifying sound difficult to believe that it was made by a fist was heard. After being hit by a punch filled with potential energy from a high vertical drop, Seirena staggered then fell down on her side. Add was preparing for an additional attack but his jaw dropped from surprise.

Elesis who landed after punching Seirena’s head wasn’t completely unscathed either. She staggered from the shock of the freefall..... Hand she used to punch with must have hurt because she shook it frantically.

“Owowow, it hurts.”

Elesis who was frowning from pain looked up at Add then waved her hand.

“It’s over! Come down.”

“....”

It was such an absurd way to solve things. Add wouldn’t have believed it if he didn’t see it first hand. As Add numb mindedly descended, Elesis was examining her own body to check if nothing was wrong.

“Ah, flying around feels nice after all. Give me a ride next time as well Add!”

“You’re not getting on from now on.”

“Why not? You were having fun too right?”

“....”

Add didn’t know how to answer. One thing he was sure of was that he was very glad Elesis wasn’t his enemy.

‘Although she is an enemy on the other side.....’

While Add was sighing internally, Elesis examined Seirena’s condition then nodded.

“Thankfully, she’s just unconscious. She’s alright.”

“Think before you hit.....”

It was generally impossible to kill someone with just a single punch, but it felt like Elesis could do it easily.

Elesis pretended to listen to Add then looked around. Almost all the servant mermaids had run away and some that got caught up in the fray were on the ground unconscious.

“It was just like this during Ash Covered Village. I think there’s something to this.”

“Tha.....”

Add who was about to answer quickly stretched his hand out to pull Elesis’ shoulder. Elesis opened her eyes widely and let herself be pulled towards Add.

Sweeep!

A sword grazed by a place where Elesis’ head just was. Elesis frowned and looked around. A woman who they never realized had appeared was withdrawing her weapon.

Serpentine sword. It was an unique sword that could be swung like a whip to cut things.

“Thanks Add, But who’s that?”

“I’ve never seen her before either.”

She was a demon judging by her horns, but the woman didn’t seem like she wanted to introduce herself because she held her two serpentine swords and just quietly stared at Add and Elesis.

Elesis was also unusually not charging in immediately. Then a dimension gate opened beside the woman and a cheerful laugh was heard.

“Ahahahaha!”

The man that appeared along with a laugh was also a demon. Similar armors, you could tell easily that those two were on the same side.

The man that appeared beside the woman stared at Elesis with a strange gaze.

“So you are.....”

“Are you Scar’s minions?”

Elesis cut off the enemy’s words then asked sharply. It was a cold voice without Elesis’ normal leisure.

The man who was speaking shrugged then nodded.

“Yes, I’m General Scar’s servant In. And this here is my twin sister.”

The man who revealed his name as In pointed towards the woman, but the woman didn’t say anything. In frowned exaggeratedly then shook his head.

“No, you can’t do that. Even if we’re going to kill them soon, you should at least introduce your name.”

“.....”

The woman silently ignored her twin brother’s words then stared straightly at Elesis. It was a direct hostile gaze.

“General Scar will hate you if you lack class.”

“.....”

The woman opened her mouth at those words.

“Jin.”

“....Yes, it seems introductions took a bit long.”

Elesis nodded then took a step forward.

In and Jin revealed themselves as servants of Scar who was trying to destroy Elrios. They looked quite powerful just from a single glance.

In clicked his tongue as he looked at unconscious Seirena then waved his hand. Then a black barrier was formed and surrounded Seirena.

“It was difficult to entrance her but it broke so easily. Should I try one more time?”

“Did Scar order you two to conquer the hot springs?”

“We volunteered. General Scar is busy.”

“.....A test.”

Jin spoke shortly then fixed the positions of her serpentine sword. Sword that had an adjustable length was troublesome to face. In was holding strange looking orbs....how they functioned was unknown but they must be a weapon.

Add was formulating a plan inside his head when Elesis turned slightly to glance back at him. She spoke carefully so enemies couldn’t hear.

“.....You think you can run away by yourself Add?”

“What?”

Add who was obviously thinking about fighting back glared at Elesis wondering what kind of nonsense she was talking about. He thought it was some kind of provocation trying to test him again but Elesis’ face looked grave.

“They are pretty strong. I’ll try to buy much time as possible so join up with rest of the group and come up with a plan.”

“.....”

“I don’t have my sword, but I can at least buy you enough time to get away.”

Elesis was still barehanded and there were two enemies. Not only that, but they were Scar’s servants so they certainly shouldn’t be taken lightly.

Add made an empty laugh then stretched his hand forwards.

“Void Impact!”

Jin backed up from this sudden attack with a slightly surprised face then waved her sword. Then the collapsed space returned to normal.

Add clicked his tongue as he glared at Jin.

“So demons here know how to block it too....”

“Add?”

“It’s a fair handicap. Who do you want to take?”

Elesis was staring at him with a surprised face but Add ignored her on purpose.

Elesis didn’t have her sword and Add’s Dynamos weren’t perfect. Retreating was the best option but In and Jin wouldn’t stand idly and let them run away.

So one remaining behind and other bringing reinforcements was the next best option. It was better to sacrifice just one rather than both.

But Add didn’t want to make such choices anymore. He would rather die fighting together.....He didn’t even have an inch of desire to leave Elesis behind.

Of course, this Elesis wasn’t Elesis that Add knew. But there was no difference. Add collected his mind as he glared at In and Jin.

“Didn’t you say our wills are connected even if universes are different?”

“Ha.....”

Elesis laughed bitterly then cracked her fingers.

“I’ll take the guy.”

“You’re telling me to face the sword?”

Well Elesis was barehanded right now, it would be difficult for her to handle swords that can change their lengths dynamically. Although they still didn’t know what In’s weapon was.....

“Alright, then let’s see who takes them down faster.”

“You’re talking like Elsword, Add.”

Elesis smiled as if she enjoyed what Add said. Add would have normally become furious about being treated same as Elsword but he just let it pass for now.

To think that a day would come when he fought for his life shoulder to shoulder with Elesis. He had never imagined this would happen even in a different universe.

“I’ll go first.”

Jin didn’t show any reaction even when Add slowly circled around her. No expression, she was completely ignoring Add who was looking for a chance to attack.

‘Shall I test her a bit?’

Add tried firing a space distortion aimed at Jin’s head. But in that moment, Jin swiftly ducked to dodge then let her sword fly. The description was a bit weird.... but you couldn’t describe it any other way than an angry snake bouncing off the ground to fly towards you!

“Kugh.”

Add quickly raised his altitude to dodge as a powerful counterattack came back from his light check. But when Jin slightly turned her wrists, her sword rose up in midair and flew in aiming towards Add’s head as he was flying up.

Ssh!

Add unknowingly sighed in relief when the blade barely grazed by his cheek. He was thankful that he was cautious from the start, he would have gotten killed otherwise.

“She’s very strong.”

Serpentine sword which was a mix between a whip and a sword. Add knew what it was but it was a first time he had faced one. Not only that, but it must be a special kind because it had an unusually long attack range.

Jin seemed to look at Add after missing her attack then she jumped up high.She jumped at least 5 meters high!

“Ah?!”

Add got startled and quickly backed out but Jin had already jumped up to Add’s eye level and was swinging her two serpentine swords sharply. Stretched out blades rushed in aiming for Add’s neck.

Quick vertical ascension or not, Add won’t be able to escape from these blades.

“Void Impact!!”

Add hastily collapsed the space in front of him to ward off the blades coming at him. It would be obvious Jin’s weapons will be damaged if her blades got caught up by the collapsing space. Jin gave up aiming for Add’s neck and withdrew her weapons.

Tap, Jin landed lightly on the ground then looked up at Add with a cold expression. Add’s altitude right now was 8 meters high. It wasn’t a distance Jin could reach even by jumping. But oppositely, it wasn’t a distance where Add’s space distortion or Void Impact could reach.

Then Jin turned her head sideways. Add quickly descended when it seemed like she was looking at Elesis who was facing off against In.

Add didn’t like this choice but he couldn’t let both Jin and In attack Elesis at the same time.

“....This isn’t good.”

There was also his Dynamos not being in a perfect state..... but this woman was strong. Add had to be careful even if he was in full shape.

Add let out a sigh of tension then scanned Jin’s movements. ‘Attack first to win’ was something you said when you were confident you’ll win..... Defeat could come from even a single minuscule mistake when fighting an opponent of this level.

And it won’t just be Add’s defeat.... Elesis who was fighting In will lose as well.

Jin noticed Add didn’t intend to move first so she lightly swung her right arm horizontally. Her serpentine sword flew towards Add again aiming for his neck.

Jin will move towards Elesis if he dodged by flying up. When Add escaped by moving left, the serpentine sword wended in midair as it chased Add. It looked like it was going to keep chasing him. Add realized the enemy’s attack range was immense so he tried to use a Void Impact again but paused.

Jin was swinging her left arm.



It wasn't a double pronged attack. They were two attacks with some time in between them. If Add dodged, she was going to watch his reaction then finish him with a second attack. But Add still couldn't give up the calculations that were already in his head.

Hesitating here would get him killed by the attack right in front of him!!

“Void Double Impact!!”

Add collapsed both spaces in the trajectories where the serpentine swords were flying in from. Jin didn't seem to have anticipated this because she quickly withdrew both of her swords.

Add panted from having to use Double unexpectedly as he observed Jin.

Slide. Jin made her serpentine swords short again then looked at Add indifferently.

“Not bad.”

“....Kukukuk.”

Add would have normally replied lightly but he just smiled right now. Pain in his arms was bad. Wounds that haven't healed yet got opened and was seeping out blood.

It hadn't been too long since he injured both of his arms during the fight with D. Even though he treated them with a potion, it wasn't like it magically healed the wounds instantly, they just enhanced natural recovery. Also, Double took too much burden on his body right now.

Jin ignored Add's smile then turned her head to look at In. It was too much of a leisurely action to be taking in the middle of a battle but she could get away with it because she was confident that Add didn't have any close quarter attacks and that her skills were above Add's.

Add also examined Elesia. Elesia who had to settle the fight barehanded was struggling quite a bit as well. Orbs that In threw displayed a binding force, it made boulders and various objects get pulled in then get shredded into thin pieces. Not even a bone would remain if humans were to get caught up in that.

Elesia had to face In who was ceaselessly throwing these orbs at her. She was dodging nimbly while just waiting for a right moment to strike. It looked like she could settle the fight if she could just get close up, but In knew this as well and was surrounding himself with orbs.

Compatibility with their opponents was bad. It might be different if Elesia had her sword, but she couldn't approach In who was only cautiously keeping Elesia at bay from a long range.

If we just change our opponents instead.....

“It's over now.”

“....”

Jin must have read Add's conclusion because she kicked the ground and rushed in. Enemy who was stronger than him was attacking. Normal people would quickly run away and try to preserve their lives. But....!

“Kahahaha!”

Add laughed joyfully as he started to fly lower. Jin was certainly powerful, it was obvious he had to risk his life in this fight.

But she was still no match for Elesis who appeared as their enemy. No matter how swift Jin was, no matter how threatening those serpentine swords were, there was no way she was stronger than Elesis who faced and overwhelmed the El Search Party all by herself!

“Try to make this entertaining, demon!!”

When Add provoked her while moving backwards, Jin frowned slightly then made a wide swing with her left arm. Serpentine sword flew towards the sky then started to fall on Add's head. Vertical slash as if chopping a firewood, Add wouldn't escape unscathed if he got hit by this attack with even potential energy behind it.

It didn't end there and her right arm was being swung horizontally. Second serpentine sword was drawing an arc as it flew towards Add's neck. Lethal attacks were coming in from both sky and ground, but Add just smiled haughtily.

No matter how strong Jin was.....she still had two arms, she only had two swords.

"Void Impact..... Triple!"

Spaces in the trajectories of two serpentine swords collapsed and space where Jin's head was exploded simultaneously as well. Jin must have never imagined this kind of counterattack because she quickly withdrew both of her serpentine swords then turned her body to dodge but she couldn't avoid her cheek from being torn and blood starting to drip from it.

Drip.

Jin rubbed her cheek that was dyed in red then glared at Add coldly. Just until now she was looking down on Add, but her gaze now held signs of caution. Add twisted his lips in order to make a smile but couldn't tell if it worked.

There was no feeling in his right arm.

“....Kukukuk.”

Thankfully, it started to hurt slowly. Add laughed gladly from the pain which confirmed his arm didn't fall off. His laugh was half a bluff to make sure Jin wouldn't attack carelessly and a half from real joy.

No matter strong Jin was, Add could win if he fought without considering his own health. He could crush her if he fought with the intention of giving at least one of his arms away.

Realizing how to close the gap in their skills made Add feel really joyful.

“Although that guy seemed to use five as a basis.”

D didn't even show any signs of fatigue or being burdened after using five Void Impacts at once. Add who could barely move his arms after using three at once could somewhat measure the gap in their skills.

Jin carefully lowered her stance and was looking for a chance to strike. It was a simple numerical calculation, Jin had two weapons but Add could attack three times at once. That's what she must be thinking. Add made a composed smile.

Pain as if his arm was going to tear off was welling up but he couldn't let it show. Then Jin will notice right away and come to attack him.

Void Impact Triple gave too much feedback to Add's body. Not just that, but not all of his Dynamos were present so it gave burden to his brain, making his vision blurry.

He honestly couldn't hold out for long.

“Add! Can you help me out?”

“.....What?”

In that moment, Elesis shouted towards him from far away. Add looked towards Elesis wondering what she meant. She had just dodged In's attack and was collecting her stance.

At this sudden conversation, In, Jin and Add's attentions all focused on Elesis.

“I'll take him down if you help me just once!”

“.....”

Asking for assistance right in front of their enemies? It was the first time Add witnessed such a bold strategy meeting. In had a blank expression for a bit then burst out laughing.

“Ahahahahaah!! Alright, humans. Both of you can try coming at me at once!!”

“In.”

“Don't stop me Jin. I'll explain to General Scar later.”

Jin looked reluctant but didn't complain anymore.

In grinned then held out his hand as if he was granting mercy, as if he was giving one more chance to the lowly.

“I’ll give you two a chance.”

“Add.”

At Elesis’ short call, Add said what he had to say.

“Go crush him.”

“Alright! I’ll put in a good word for you to Eve later!”

“What....?”

Add got confused and tried to say something but it was already after Elesis had dashed out. It was a charge that only headed forwards and In was grinning at the end of it.

It looked reckless on the first glance but Add didn’t come to assist for no reason. Void Impact Triple, even if Add didn’t care about his own health, two, no one more will be the limit. But will Jin who became cautious after seeing blood fall for it?

But In was timely saying that he’ll accept the challenge. So Add will.... take In down right now using triple for sure. Then they’ll take down remaining Jin with cooperative attacks!

“Ahahahaha!!”

In laughed merrily as he continuously threw the orbs in his hand. Getting sucked in by those orbs would mean the end. But Elesis didn’t care about the orbs and was still just charging forwards.

She’ll die if left alone. Add who was watching got surprised and quickly came up with the necessary calculations.

As Void Impact exploded, orb that was flying in towards Elesis got deflected and turned in a wrong direction.

“Hmm?”

To think the orb will merely get deflected after making contact with Void Impact which could shatter space. These were no ordinary orbs after all.

“Ahahaha, you seem to have an interesting trick!”

In laughed as if he was entertained then threw an orb towards Add this time. Add was about to dodge but paused after noticing In was trying to throw a different orb towards Elesis.

Elesis would be hit if he dodged.

“Void Double Impact!!”

Enough force was needed to change the trajectory of the orbs so space distortion wouldn’t do. Add quickly took care of two orbs with a Double.

In’s face turned serious when his attack failed for the second time.

“Not bad.”

Orb in In’s hand divided into four. Four attacks at once, Add had no way to block them. His body was in tatters with just Triple already, Quadruple, 4 times was absolutely impossible.

But then Elesis who was charging towards In shouted.

“Add, 10 meters to the front! 30 meters to the right!”

“What?”

As Add was wondering what Elesis meant, she stopped charging forwards then circled around. Add was doubtful but fired Void Impact towards locations where Elesis had pointed out.

Then the orbs that flew towards Elesis got deflected on their own. In frowned and was trying to throw more orbs but Elesis turned drastically to the right in that moment. In had no choice but to throw the orbs towards her new location.

Add who was watching was extremely shocked. Elesis was luring the enemy so he could fire only towards a certain direction then made Add plant Void Impacts beforehand.

It was completely innovative. This wasn’t something that was easy to come up with on the fly and the bait for luring the enemy was her own life. It was over if there was even a single mistake in their cooperation but Elesis didn’t hesitate even for a bit.

“Hmm....?”

In realized the situation too and his jaw dropped. Attempting to throw his orbs towards Elesis who was closing the distance would only end with her moving away with an intricate rhythm and having multiple orbs taken out by a single Void Impact.

“In that case....”

Let’s take Add down! In was making his decision when.... Elesis kicked up high from the ground.

“It’s too late.”

In opened his eyes widely as he saw Elesis dropping from up high like a hawk sweeping down to snatch a rabbit. Her fist was clenched tightly, In wanted to throw his orbs but he had just used them all up.

He had nothing in his hand, but enemy was coming straight for him.

Crash! Thud!!

Sound of an impact rang out and the ground shook loudly. Elesis stayed still for a bit with her fist pressed down on the ground. A large crack had formed on the ground where the fist had hit.

It was a punch that knocked Seirena unconscious in a single hit. It could easily take In out in one hit too.

If it landed.

“.....I told you not to interfere.”

“It was dangerous.”

Jin who had just tied her serpentine sword around In’s arm to pull him towards her responded coldly. In was about to say something angrily but staggered. Wind pressure from Elesis’ punch had grazed by his forehead and had torn off his skin.

Drip. Jin pointed towards her cheek to show In who was touching the blood dropping from his forehead in shock. In frowned after seeing the blood on his twin sister’s cheek then nodded soon after.

“Thanks for the help.”

“Let’s do this properly.”

While the demons were talking amongst themselves, Elesis slowly withdrew her fist then stood straight up. Add approached her while still being guarded against In and Jin as he spoke.

“Let’s change opponents. I’ll take the orbs and you face the swords. That should be better.”

“I don’t think that’s going to work.”

The reason why it wasn’t going to work was appearing before their eyes.

Dimension gates opened beside In and Jin then demons poured out. In who had withdrawn his smile declared with a serious face.

“It’s time to end this.”

“.....”

It’s over. Demons burning with blue flames were continuing to pour out even while Add was sighing in despair.

Approximately around hundred..... and each one of them looked more powerful than regular demons.

It might work out if they just had to take care of these demons..... but there was no way In and Jin would stand by idly.

“What should we do?”

“I’ll stop them so run away, Add.”

“Stop saying nonsense and give me an actual way to win.”

Should they run away quickly on the Dynamos? Add was trying to measure a safe route but there were demons appearing from behind them as well. There were also incubi and succubi flying in the sky.

Escape still looked possible with high speed flight that Add could perform on his own.... But it was impossible to escape with Elesis.

“This is the way to win. They probably won’t kill me right away. Scar is out to get me personally. Escape from here and join up with the others then come to rescue me.”

“.....”

It was a quite reasonable suggestion. Add would only die if he continued to fight here. Elesis smiled cheerfully.

“I always wanted to try playing the role of a princess who gets captured by a bad monster then waits for a prince to come rescue her at least once. This looks like a great chance.”

“That’s the worst miscasting in history.”

When Add answered indifferently, Elesis asked with her eyes. She meant do you have any other ideas. Add reached inside his jacket pocket without answering.

Add placed sleeping Eun on top of his palm then poked her with his finger to wake her up. Demons surrounding two of them were waiting for In and Jin’s orders.

“In.”

“Wait a bit.”

In was displaying a strange interest in Eun that Add had just brought out. Eun who got awoken from her sound sleep yawned then stretched her arms.

“How could you wake a woman who was sound asleep? Not just that, but there are many faces that I should be seeing for the first time.”

“Get ready.”

Add spoke sharply then took a deep breath. It was better to turn back time than leaving Elesis behind and running away by himself.

Eun took a slight glance at Elesis then smiled slyly.

“It seems boy’s preference changed while I was sleeping. After going round and round, it’s Elly now?”

“This isn’t the time to jok.....”

“It’s the time to joke. Why did boy become so impatient?”

Eun said this then she hopped on top of Add’s shoulder. Add was trying to question why was she so calm when he realized Eun was looking up towards the sky.

As if she was looking at a welcome guest.

“One who should have been there is running here right now. It’s a scene I drew longingly for a long time.”

“What?”

Add also followed Eun’s words and looked up. Elesis also looked up, In, Jin and the other demons looked up towards the sky as well.

A meteor was falling.

A meteor emitting blue light was falling on top of the demons. Her long hair waving in the wind, with a confident smile on her face, clenching her fists filled with fighting spirit.

She shouted cheerfully to the whole world.

“I’m here!!”

Booooooom!! Ground broke with a sound of heavy shock as huge dust storm blew across the area. Even before both allies and enemies could react to this sudden appearance.....demons suddenly started to get flung away.

“Haaaaah!!”

Lu was running amok hitting, throwing, breaking and swinging her fists in the middle of demons. Demons that got caught up in her attacks helplessly flew up and dropped on the ground.

“That’s.....”

“Don’t mind her. Attack!”

Jin opened her eyes widely in surprise and In ordered cheerfully. Lu was performing superbly knocking demons out of her way but her landing point was quite a long distance away from Add and Elesis. Add was quickly formulating a plan as Steel Lava Fighters came to attack them. But then a dimension gate opened and Oberon appeared.

As Oberon with half of his body destroyed for some reason swung his tonfa to block the Steel Lava Fighters, Add turned to look around. It wasn't just Lu, Eve had come as well.

Just as Add had expected, he saw Eve hastily coming up the stairs. She was still far away but they could join up with her if they held out a bit longer.

But Oberon who supposedly came to rescue them was surrounded and was getting beat up by five Steel Lava Fighters. At least his endurance must be top notch because he was holding out even though he was half destroyed, but he was not too much of a help for Add and Elesis.

“Elesis, we have to escape for now!”

They had to meet up with either Lu or Eve. Add who had a superior mobility had to step up. Elesis realized Add's intention and was about to turn around but suddenly laughed.

“I don't think we'll have to.”

As her words ended, a sound of air being torn was heard as the ground in front of Elesis shattered.

Giant sword was stuck on the ground, it was Elesis' sword.

Elesis smiled brightly then expressed her gratitude.

“Thanks, Big Sister Rena.”

“Let's leave the talk for later.”

Rena who was standing on top of a Steel Lava Fighter answered shortly then turned around. Both enemies and allies hadn't known Rena had appeared before she spoke up. Even the Lava Fighter that was getting stepped on only noticed when it heard Rena's word then frantically shook its head trying to shake Rena off.

But Rena easily matched her balance with the shaking Lava Fighter's movements as she lightly slashed with her sword.

Slash, a sharp sound was heard then five demon soldiers fell all at once. After easily clearing the vicinity, Rena jumped up to land on top of another group of soldiers.

Steel Lava Fighters that were getting stepped on quickly tried to attack but Rena hopped to another soldier each time as she slashed with her sword. She was using a reliable tactic of taking them out one by one.

And Elesis grabbed her sword.

“Then.... shall I go?”

Elesis made a big smile as she swung her sword while jumping into the enemies.

Booom! With sound of a shockwave that one couldn't believe a human had caused, dozens of demons soldiers flew up all at once. She was literally matchless, she was displaying a scene reminiscent of an angry boar charging everywhere as she launched all the demons she came into contact with.

In and Jin's expressions changed now that Lu and Rena appeared and Elesis started to sweep through the demons after getting her weapon back.

“This is dangerous.”

“Don't get scared. We still have the advantage!”

In threw his orb at Elesis. But at that moment, Elesis' eyes seemed to flash then she stomped down hard on the ground. After shattering the ground to plant her feet firmly, Elesis held her sword with both her hands and swung widely.

Towards the orb.

“Haaaaaaaah!!”

Clank!! Elesis literally hit away the orb that was flying at her. She hit away an orb with powerful binding force with just her raw strength and perseverance.

As In stared unbelievably at what just happened, orb that went flying into the sky displayed its binding force to destroy Succubi and Incubi that were waiting for their chances.

Screams and blood of demons were everywhere both in ground and sky. It was a chaos that In hadn't expected even a minute ago. In's face turned pale when the orbs that he took pride in were treated like toys but then Jin spoke with a low voice.

“Come to your senses. Let's focus our attacks on the weakest one first.”

In calmed his mind at his twin sister's words. It was impossible to take Rena, Elesis and Lu all at once. Then they had to attack the weakest one first.

Add.

In and Jin nodded as they threw both an orb and serpentine swords toward Add at the same time. Add was facing the Steel Lava Fighters but then his face froze when he saw the focused attacks flying at him all at once. It was an attack he might barely survive if he used Void Impact Triple.....but that was impossible now because he was too tired.

Should he block it? Can he shake it off using mobility? He wasn't sure about both options.

"It seems you're still useless."

Add was struggling to make a choice when a cold voice scolding him was heard. Familiar voice, her next words came even before Add turned around to look.

"Just take care of one of them."

As if drawn by her words, Add fired a Void Impact to deflect the orb away. Remaining blades of two serpentine swords were flying in towards him but he didn't think it would be dangerous.

Because Eve was beside him.

Electron ball and Ophelia deflected away the two serpentine swords. Add sighed in relief and finally turned around slowly to look.

Eve was scanning the battlefield with a prudish expression.

"I learned that humans improve as time goes on but it seems you are devolving instead. Try reflecting on yourself."

"Yes, I'll do that."

Add admitted willingly. Even putting aside top tier fighters like Lu or Elesis.....he had a thought that maybe he was the weakest amongst this universe's El Search Party. This was probably correct.

".....It's good if you feel remorseful."

Eve looked surprised as if she didn't expect Add to acknowledge so willingly. She mumbled for a bit then fired an electron ball to save Oberon who was struggling from being surrounded then muttered.

"I don't understand why I have to take care of you each time."

"Thanks for saving me again."

She saved his life so he should be thankful. Eve got very startled when Add thanked her sincerely.

"I, I didn't say it to you. I was talking about Oberon because he was dawdling. Even if he's injured he shouldn't be getting beaten this badly."

"Really?"

"Ehm... .ehm....."

Eve made two fake coughs on purpose then carefully glared at Add.

“Even if you’re same person from a parallel universe, there shouldn’t be any reason my response towards you should change. Prideful Nasods do not hesitate to protect those that are weak.”

“Thanks.”

“So stay close to me. It’s dangerous.”

So I have the immature kid position now. Add thought but didn’t try to refute and just gave an empty laugh.

He was somewhat confident in his skills, but he had no choice but to admit that it didn’t work too well in this universe and that he was the weakest member amongst the current El Search Party. He felt a bit lighter after admitting it.

At Add’s laugh, Eve spoke after a moment of silence.

“Maybe if you want to become a bit stronger, I can give you a Nasod style training.”

“We’ll talk about that later.”

Add nodded then blew away the demons with a shockwave. He didn’t want to stand around doing nothing even if he was being treated as a weakling.

In’s face turned grim from despair after Eve joined to protect Add and more demon soldiers started getting defeated. There were still many demons remaining but they weren’t fighting aggressively now because their morale had been hit quite heavily.

Jin level-headedly made her decision.

“Let’s retreat.”

“Run away now? What will we say to General Scar?”

Jin couldn’t find any words to reply when In scowled and protested. These siblings could do anything for Scar and didn’t want to disappoint him.

In and Jin were hesitating when a sharp voice was heard in the middle of all the screaming and falling demons.

“.....You won’t escape from this place!”

There was deep anger and resolve inside that voice. Everyone was trying to find the voice’s owner.....when catastrophe fell from the sky.

Countless balls of fire were falling from the sky.

Hail of fire was falling towards the ground as if they were determined to not leave even a single demon behind, as if wanting to turn the ground into a sea of fire.

“Everyone gather!”

Reacting to the sudden disaster falling from the sky, Add called his comrades to his side then opened the Dimension Distortion. It wasn’t very sturdy because Dynamos weren’t in perfect shape, but it was better than nothing.

Thankfully, the fireballs were aimed towards the demons so they didn’t fall anymore towards where the El Search Party had gathered. Endlessly falling fireballs stopped instantly when there were no more demons standing.

Extreme firepower had annihilated all the demons.

“....Is it over?”

Add disassembled the Dimension Distortion then became astonished. Ground had turned into a sea of fire in such a short time. Flames were so strong that the ground was wavy from being melted.

As everyone was keeping silent from being overwhelmed, there was a shadow moving through the flames. As the shadow slowly walked towards them, Add went on alert thinking it was In or Jin.

“Those twins got away.”

Girl with a red hair and red clothes who was holding a spear in her hand spoke regrettably. From what she said, this girl was the culprit behind the sudden rain of fire.

It didn’t seem like she was an enemy but no one knew who she was. But the girl who had a dark expression saw the El Search Party then suddenly smiled brightly as she waved her hand.

“Ya-ho, You guys are the El Search Party right?”

“I see, so you are....”

Elesis nodded and was about to ask when the girl smiled brightly and twirled her spear once.

“Yea, I’m Priestess of Fire, Ignia.”

5. Desires of Future Past

Phantasmal Geysers became El Serach Party's territory thanks to Ignia's efforts in driving away all the demons including In and Jin.

Temporary lodge in the Geysers. Elesis visited and spoke to Add who was observing wounds on his arms.

"It looks like Seirena woke up. She was entranced by the demons just as I thought. She thanked us and said she'll cooperate with us in any way she can."

"Okay."

Add answered appropriately as he tied bandages around his arm. It was difficult because he had to tie his right arm.

"Stay still."

Elesis snatched the bandages Add was struggling to tie then tied it around Add's arm herself. Add missed the timing to stop her so he just left her to it.

"What about that priestess?"

"Ignia seems to have arrived earlier than the others. Others will also arrive in a day. Lu and Big Sister Rena had a big fight just like I thought and are now having a cold war. Also, Add's room here is coincidentally on the 3rd floor. You might be able to peep at the girl's bath from here.... but I'm going to punish you if you do."

Add merely frowned when Elesis warned him while grinning. Elesis made a strange expression when she didn't get an answer.

"What? Were you really going to peep?"

"Nonsense. Why would I do something like that?"

"Hmm....."

Elesis made a mysterious sigh then petted Add's head. Her hand felt like it was soothing a sulking cat. Add pushed away Elesis in annoyance.

Elesis willingly got pushed away then gave Add a strange gaze.

"Everything worked out alright because of you. Thanks."

"....."

Elesis smiled as she patted Add's shoulder.

"There's also men's bath in this hot springs so rest up. Also, Eve looks like she wants to have a talk with you so go talk to her sometime."

Elesis said strange words then left the room while smiling. Add who was left alone let out a heavy sigh then looked up at the ceiling.

Dynamics weren't perfect in this fight, but even if they were perfect.....could he have beaten Jin?

He knew very well that he couldn't have. Add's battle capability was reaching its limit. He had been reinforcing his lacking firepower with Double but there were many skilled individuals that this didn't work against.

"That's the key.....after all."

Add suppressed his anxiety as he recalled Eve's core. He wanted to steal Eve's core and become stronger soon as possible. Then he wanted to quickly return to the original universe to defeat D and solve everything once and for all.

"Calm down. I can't fail this time....."

Everything will have been for nothing if he focused only on stealing Eve's core and couldn't get the kiss. He had to be able to go back to the original universe.

"Let's first rest up....."

Let's think of how to get the kiss while talking to others. Since such an act seemed like what people did on regular basis.....there was no reason Add couldn't do it. His head just couldn't keep up because he had never imagined himself doing such a thing. But there was no particular reason Add couldn't do something that people did often during their lives.

"Kukukukuk, yes. It should be simple once I find out the formula. Affection point or whatever, I'll take care of them all at once."

Add was about to stand up to go collect information when Eun came out from his jacket pocket.

"It's been a while since I've seen you look so happy, boy."

"We'll be going back soon. If you have things to prepare, do them soon."

"So you found a way to defeat D?"

".....Yes."

Add answered simply because he didn't want to say out loud that it was Eve's core. Eun frowned then changed the topic.

“Then what will you do about going back?”

“I’m about to go gather some information regarding that. Something will come up if I go ask around.”

“You can’t be thinking of asking a target for the kiss directly right? No matter how blind boy is about male and female relationships, I trust that he isn’t that ignorant.”

“That Fire Priestess is in the El Search Party. Maybe she might know something.”

Eun shook her head from side to side.

“No, why are you travelling so far to ask when I’m right here? It’s sad, sad indeed. Boy can probably do anything if he obediently listens to what I say.”

“Do you think I’ll trust the words of a fox?”

Eun wasn’t trustworthy because she had so many previous negative records. Then Eun hopped down and wagged her index finger.

“Then is it fine if I’m not a fox?”

Eun closed her eyes then seemed to perform a somersault.....

Then Ara suddenly appeared.

“.....Huh?”

She had white hair, red eyes, fox ears and tails but her face was certainly Ara’s. But she was different from Ara that Add knew. You could sense a voluptuous aura not just from her atmosphere but in her white outfit as well.

“There, how do you like it?”

“.....What kind of trick is this?”

“Geez, Why do you have such a cold face when I ambitiously when out of my way to present this to you? Ara might not be an overwhelming beauty but she is still very beautiful.”

Add didn’t even pretend to listen. He didn’t want to get caught up in a fox’s prank.

“This form is one of the possibilities that Ara possesses. How does she look? Isn’t she beautiful?”

Eun who borrowed Ara’s appearance lowered her upper body as if to show Add. Her deep cleavage started to get revealed even moreAdd couldn’t ignore even if he tried so he closed his eyes and spoke sharply.

“Stop. I’m not going to play along with your jokes right now.”

“You speak as if you ever did. You always refused.”

Add just closed his eyes and tried to ignore her. But he couldn’t help but to open his eyes again when he heard Eun’s footsteps moving. Eun casually lied down on the bed. Add was sitting on before then gently waved her hand towards Add.

“Why don’t we share some stories on the same bed tonight? I’m fine if we share something other than stories.”

“I told you to stop joking around.”

It was Ara’s appearance but it looked seductive when Eun was the one who was acting. Then Eun spoke softly.

“Anyways, did you choose whose affection point to raise? The method changes depending on who you choose. For Ara, I can help you very well with, and for Elly, you just became close to her so you just have to handle things well from now on. Rena is cold, but she should still be fine. Lu....hmm, can be exempted. Aisha will be a rigorous journey as well.”

“I’ll take care of that on my own.”

Add ignored and was about to stand up when Eun’s voice became cold.

“You couldn’t have chosen the girl as your candidate right?”

When Add didn’t answer, Eun abruptly grabbed Add’s wrist. Even though Add ignored and tried to get away.....he couldn’t beat her in strength.

“Let go of me.”

“You should know that I won’t let go even if you say that. Who lets go of a hand they grabbed on top of the bed?”

How she said such things with Ara’s face was uncomfortable. Add prepared Dynamo’s formulas as he looked back.

“Are you saying you want to fight?”

“Fight with boy on top of the bed, I was looking forward to this.”

“.....This is my final warning. Let go.”

Eun grinned.

“Aren’t we both souls separated from our original universes and are now wandering the purgatory? I just want us to deeply share our affections. Boy gets embarrassed too much.”

Add’s patience ran out.

Hot springs, girls bath.

Elesis had her body immersed shoulder deep inside the water and was exhaling in a relaxed manner. Eat and rest well after the fight. Hot springs was the perfect resting spot for her.

Splash.

Elesis was relaxing by herself then a sound of water splashing was heard. Elesis opened her eyes and saw a long hair across the mist.

“Oh, Big Sister Rena. You’re here?”

“.....You were inside already.”

Rena answered indifferently as she approached. Elesis pointed to the spot beside her asking Rena to sit down but Rena just quietly looked down.

“Why did you do something so reckless like this?”

“What do you mean?”

“Elesis.”

When Rena bit down hard on her lips, Elesis stopped playing ignorant and sighed composedly.

“How was it fighting Lu? She was strong right?”

“.....Yes.”

Even Rena who couldn’t look at demons so kindly, no, who only had negative feelings towards demons had no choice but to admit Lu’s skills.

Rena asked quietly.

“Why did you make Lu and me fight?”

Rena also had a hunch that Elesis didn’t divide the teams like this and broke away from the party for no reason. She also knew that she had to cooperate with Lu and prioritize rescuing Elesis.

But she ended up having a big fight with Lu despite knowing this. She couldn’t help but to fight. She couldn’t withstand without fighting.

“Should I say it was something like.....casting out negative feelings?”

Mixed feelings dwelled in Rena's face when Elesis said this. She fought Lu with all she had....but there was no way all her feelings would be settled from that. This wasn't some quarrel amongst kids, everyone becomes friends after fighting? It was absurd.

She wouldn't have fought so furiously in the first place if her feelings could be settled so easily.

"Elesis, sorry but I....."

"There's nothing Big Sister Rena has to apologize about. You don't have to say such things."

Elesis waved her hand as if telling Rena to stop talking about nonsense.

"It makes less sense to ask you to accept Lu and Ciel willingly as comrades. I don't have any intention to make such an impossible request and won't in the future."

"....."

"Same goes for Eve. I won't ask the two of you to do something like accept Lu and Ciel from bottom of your hearts. That would be same as asking Big Sister Rena and Eve to pretend as if your painful memories never existed."

Elesis sighed then stood up.

"Chung and Ara get along well as best of friends but that isn't something easy to do. There are so many things we lost....and asking to treat those painful memories as if they never existed is ridiculous."

".....Then why did you do this?"

"First of all, I wanted to examine Add separately. He strangely catches my fancy."

Elesis made a serene smile as if she really hadn't expected this.

"What else?"

"Hmm."

Elesis hesitated for a moment then laughed cheerfully.

"I would like it if you don't mind what I'm about to say too much, Big Sister Rena."

"Alright, so tell me."

"Big Sister, how long do you plan on fighting?"

Elesis spoke as if it wasn't a big deal.

“Our immediate objective is to defeat Scar and stopping his plan of resurrecting the demon god. Then we have to stop the dragon also. But what about after that?”

“What are you getting at?”

“Are you planning to eradicate all the demons from the world?”

Rena’s face froze. Elesis knew she was speaking harshly. She was asking many of your people were killed and they were driven to brink of extinction.....so how much vengeance will you exact from that?

“Are you planning to invade the Demon Realm and kill every last one of the demons?”

“.....I never thought about doing something like that.”

“But if someone asked if Big Sister had a right to do such a thing, most people in Elrios will agree that you do. Eye for an eye, it’s a simple principle.”

Rena carefully bit her lips.

“You probably aren’t telling me to actually do that. What are you saying?”

“Big Sister could actually do it. But I would like it if you didn’t.”

Rena didn’t answer for a long time at Elesis’ quiet request. She let out a thin sigh then switched the topic.

“Then how about you? From what you’re saying, it seems you’ve already made up your mind. What will you do after defeating the demons? You.... also lost your kingdom.”

“I’ll rebuild the Velder Kingdom. I’ll gather all the scattered people and give them a place to live.”

Elesis spoke shortly then looked up towards the sky. Sky looked beautiful when looking at it from inside the hot spring.

“Of course this is just my choice so you can’t say that this might be a right choice. But I don’t want to see Big Sister Rena not being able to forgive the demons and waving your sword even after the war.”

“.....”

“I know this is just my selfishness. So let’s just say that I was being selfish.”

“Did you get captured on purpose merely because of that? You’re reckless as always.”

“Merely? It’s not merely. It’s been such a long time since Big Sister Rena smiled.”

Elesis lowered her gaze from the sky and smiled as she looked at Rena.

“I would like Big Sister to smile just like before.”

“Such luxury is.....”

“I know. That’s why I said this is just me being selfish.”

Rena didn’t say anything for a while then shook her head.

“I can’t answer because this is so sudden.”

When Rena turned around, Elesis nonchalantly hugged Rena from the back.

Elesis rested her chin on Rena’s shoulder then sighed.

“You came to the hot springs and you’re leaving without even dipping your body in the water?”

“I’m just trying to think by myself for a bit.”

Elesis sighed when Rena answered seriously while pushing her away.

“Like I said. You became too serious, Big Sister Rena. Even if you have an important role of leading the Elves, can’t you loosen up a bit when you’re with me? Look, there’s no extra flabs on your belly.”

Rena got startled and looked back when Elesis playfully pressed on various places of her body.

“You’re getting thinner each day but how come your breasts are still the same? Not all Elves seem to be like this. Just what kind of cheat are you using Big Sister Rena?”

“What do you mean by cheat....”

“It’s a rare chance to relax so let’s get a gooood long rest, alright?”

Rena closed her eyes and sighed when Elesis requested persistently. Looking back on the conversation right now, she felt embarrassed about not being able to overcome her emotions and fighting with Lu.

She had no choice at the moment..... But actually she shouldn’t have done that. Having done something so childish was embarrassing.

“Alright, alright so get off me.”

“Why are you so embarrassed?”

“.....I said it’s nothing.”

Rena struggled to suppress her feelings as she shook her head. Elesis was staring at her with curiosity in her eyes but she couldn’t reveal her feelings right now.



“Like I said. You became too serious, Big Sister Rena.”

It's been such a long time since she fought together with Elesis....but she just found out for the first time that Elesis had been caring about her even with something this delicate.

“What you said. I'll think about it carefully.”

“Yes, thanks.”

Elesis smiled as she hugged Rena tightly. Rena was hesitating if she should speak more about how she felt right now.... But then she sensed a sudden presence and raised her head.

Splash!!

Water splashed up and a ripple got spread across the girl's bath. Elesis and Rena exchanged glances then looked towards the source of the ripple.

“What just fell?”

“.....We'll know if we go check it out right?”

Elesis looked at the ripple with a serious face then grabbed her sword that she placed at the hot springs entrance. Then both of them slowly approached the source of the ripple.... Rena spoke confusedly.

“There's nothing here.”

“.....Really?”

Elesis confirmed with a doubtful expression but there really was nothing. Rena had a puzzled look but Elesis thought for a moment then laughed.

“So things like this can happen too.”

Elesis closed the issue appropriately then stole a glance at the lodge El Search Party was staying. 3rd floor, window of Add's room was open.

Unlike before.

Add's bedroom.

“Huff, huff.....”

Add who was entirely soaked with water tried to catch his breath. In front of him, Ara was lying down sideways voluptuously on the bed with her eyes opened narrowly. She was humming thinly as she poured liquor in the cup she was holding and drank.

She had Ara's appearance but this was Eun.

“.....You, you just had to!”

“Oh, did you have a good sightseeing boy?”

Eun waved her hand in a tone as if she was asking how you've been. Add was shivering in anger but he couldn't easily attack her.

Eun was strong. Even before Add who ran out of patience got a chance to attack, she lunged in like a spectre and suppressed Add with a close quarter combat. If that wasn't enough, she threw him into the girls' bath.

This was totally not how you treated an injured person, but putting that aside...

“Why did you have to throw me into the girls' bath?”

“Sip.”

Eun didn't answer and sipped on her drink. Effects of alcohol must have been kicking in because her face heated up and turned red.

Eun had thrown Add in there on purpose without a doubt. Of course it was funny for him to ask since he tried to attack her too.....but there was men's bath too, she didn't have to throw him into the girls' bath.

He thankfully escaped using a teleport with all his might, it would have been a disaster if he was caught by Rena or Elesis.

“I thought boy was acting too nervous so I thought he might loosen up if he watched some bodies of beautiful women.”

“Do you call that an....”

“Stop with the boring answers already. Why don't you just say Elly or Rena isn't good enough for you? And I'd be really happy personally if you said you liked Ara.”

“.....”

Add didn't even want to answer now. Trying to emotionally argue with someone like this was foolish. Add was gritting his teeth in displeasure when Eun smiled and slightly pressed on her breast with her finger.

How her glamorous breasts waned looked very suggestive.

“If you don't have any courage to speak to Ara personally then how about me?”

“Just how much are you planning to get on my nerves?”

“That should be given. One that boy wants isn’t me after all.”

Eun didn’t even blink an eye at Add’s angry response. She spoke as if she was a passerby, as if it was no big deal.

“The girl is the only one boy desires after all. No matter what I say or suggest, boy doesn’t even pretend to listen. Even if I purposely bring up other women he doesn’t even give them an eye or make a move on them. The one boy’s heart desires is only the girl so he doesn’t even look at other women.”

“.....What?”

Do foxes get drunk too? When Add scowled, Eun stood up while wagging her tail.

Her eyes looked dangerous for some reason.

“You look as if you want to refute what I said. You look as if you want to be angry at me. Go ahead and get angry all you want. Long as that can change the direction of the arrow in boy’s heart.”

Add unknowingly back stepped when Eun got up and approached him. Eun slowly drove Add into a corner without letting him escape.

“Boy is cool-headed but emotional. He prioritizes rationality but suppresses his emotions so he is cold but is hot at the same time. He especially burns up regardless of consequences when it’s about the girl.”

“Who.....”

“Stop with the boring answers. Boy’s responses are too trivial. He just says ‘that’s not it’ or ‘when did I ever?’ and just tries to threaten me. I won’t deny there’s significant amusement in teasing you but isn’t it about time you try doing something called thinking?”

Add’s face turned stiff at Eun’s last word, at her mocking tone. It sounded strange for something a drunk person would say and it somehow hurt his pride.

Eun threw a question as she approached closer.

“Why am I doing this?”

“.....?”

“Have you ever thought why I would do something like this? Why am I doing this? Have you ever thought why I would go out of my way to do things that gets on boy’s nerves repeatedly? Why do I make you fall into strange situations with other women? Because it’s fun? Because I’m bored? Because I have nothing better to do?”

“.....What do you mean?”

“Would I really do such a thing? Do you think I’m that foolish? You didn’t trust me and suspected me all this time so why do you conclude that these actions I take are simply jokes and pranks?”

Something was strange. Eun smiled coldly when she saw Add’s nervous face.

“Does boy think I’m an idiot?”

“.....”

She wasn’t an idiot. Eun was sly but her brain was working properly. How she hid D’s identity an absolute secret was one example.

“Do you think I act however I wish without any thoughts? I admit I have a tendency to do things just for my amusement and to ease my boredom. But is that really everything?”

“.....Just state your point.”

Add felt like this was something he had to listen to. Eun stretched out her arms to press on walls on both sides of Add’s head. After positioning herself to trap Add, Eun smiled sorrowfully and seductively.

“Why have I been doing things that boy wouldn’t like?”

“.....”

“Would I not have known that boy will hate me if I threw him into the girls’ bath where Rena and Elly was? Did I really not know it would cause boy to build grudge against me?”

“.....You mean there’s a reason?”

Just what reason would that be? Eun was just trying to ease her boredom. She was provoking Add just to make him angry.....

Add’s face froze. Eun smiled as if she was saying told you so.

“Yes, boy must have realized by now. What reason do I have to make boy angry?”

“.....”

“Boy and I have the same goals of wanting to defeat D. But why have I been going out of my way to do things that makes boy angry at me? Especially when we have to work together in order to return to our original universe?”

This wasn’t the first time. When turning back time in Elder, Eun purposely dropped Add in the middle of girls bathing.

But that was a device to make Add apologize honestly and gain the group’s trust....

“.....That wasn’t the only time.”

There was also a time when she was waiting naked when Add woke up. Although things got complicated after Eve saw that scene.

Add’s face turned stiff as he backtracked the events one by one.

“.....When rewinding time to fight Elesis again, you had to drop me into where Rena was changing.”

“Yes, you must remember now.”

“.....”

Add had treated these as nasty pranks. That it was Eun being ill-natured at the cost of helping to rewind time. He was treating them as Eun making fun of him and was putting up with them even while becoming angry.

Add had treated those situations as sort of a wage that he had to pay so he had half given up trying to question them.

“But that was just you.....”

“Prank? Me?”

Eun burst out laughing as if she was saying stop talking about nonsense.

“Why would I? Of course, I’m a fox so I like pranks. But why would I go out of my way to pull pranks that can ruin my relationship with the boy?”

“.....”

But it can’t be explained any other way than that.....

If it’s not a prank, then why did she drop him in a place where girls are bathing or changing clothes? Just what in the world was she doing?

“Yes, boy would like to make that conclusion. Boy just wants to push all the blames upon me. Because I’m an untrustworthy fox, because I’m wicked enough to hide my intentions all this time, boy just writes me off as a bad fox who likes to mess with him.”

Eun let out a bitter laugh.

“He never even imagines that there’s a proper reason behind it.”

“.....If it isn’t a prank then just what is it?”

Add’s voice shook. It felt ominous, it was dangerous.

He had a feeling that something outrageous was waiting for him, but he couldn't stop himself from asking.

"It's true that I like pranks..... But I wouldn't do it to the point of provoking boy's anger. Of course, boy and my standards are different....."

"So what's the reason? Just why.....did you make me see such things?"

Made him see. Yes, this expression was correct. When Add asked nervously, Eun didn't answer for a while then slowly moved her hand.

Eun slightly stroked Add's chin with her hand then answered gently.

"Because it was needed."



“.....Just why? Could it be that putting me in those kind of situations was needed for defeating D?”

Add got impatient and asked whatever that came to his mind.....and an unexpected answer came back.

“Yes that’s correct.”

Nonsense. What does watching girls bathe and change have to do with D? Add was about to laugh in disbelief but paused.

Eun’s face looked ever so bitter and sorrowful.

“I don’t know about delicate emotions of humans so I could only use a crude method like this.....but it must not have had any effect.”

“So just what do you mea....”

“Boy had to be drawn to a woman other than the girl. I couldn’t think of a clear way so tried various things.”

Add’s tongue froze. If you combined D, who Add absolutely couldn’t believe was his future self and what Eun said just now, a totally unbelievable story comes out.

A story he absolutely didn’t want to say with his own mouth, rode on Eun’s lips and trickled out.

“Time to end this forever long journey is approaching. Shouldn’t you realize it by yourself already, boy?”

“What you’re saying is that....”

“Yes, it seems you understood now.”

Eun stroked Add’s face with a sorrowful expression.

“Boy’s lunatic obsession with the girl turns boy into D.”

“.....”

He didn’t want to admit it.

“Boy jumped over time in order to save the girl. Do you honestly think he can’t go even further?”

“.....”

He couldn’t admit it.

“He doesn’t hesitate to knead, disturb and destroy the universe according to his own greed. He imprisons everything on top of his palm and makes them dance endlessly.”

“.....”

“Obsession towards the girl, yearning to obtain the girl even if he has to throw everything away, that’s what creates D.”

Add closed his eyes. Many words trying to refute those words rose up but he couldn’t say any one of them aloud. What dwelled in his heart was lamentation and despair.

“.....That’s what happened.”

What came out was a disheveled sigh.

He fought jumping over time in order to prevent Eve’s destruction.

Then was there a reason why he couldn’t destroy the universe in order to obtain Eve? Was there a reason why he couldn’t tailor the universe to his own tastes and control everyone’s destinies?

“So that’s....what happened.”

He couldn’t help but to understand why his future self turned out like that.

The fight ended. The devil withdrew his hand.

El Search Party that charged in bravely all fell. Ara was collapsed on the floor with broken spear in her hand. Chung’s head was crashed into the wall with his armor and Destroyer broken. Elsword was kneeling and didn’t move anymore.

And Eve.

Moby and Reby were sadly circling around Eve who lay collapsed on her side. The devil stared at this scene for a long while then asked quietly.

“Will you still continue?”

“.....Huff, huff.”

Aisha was breathing heavily and barely standing by leaning on her staff. The fight was decided already, the devil quietly stared at her.

“Lightning.....”

“Stop, it’s boring now.”

When the devil snapped his finger, magic energy gathered on tip of Aisha’s hand disappeared. It wasn’t that he rewound time in a certain area. He had changed the location where the magic energy gathered instead.

This meant that the devil had seized not only time but space as well.

Aisha still forced herself to stand despite knowing everything was over. The devil spoke quietly.

“You’ve done well hindering me for such a long time. I’ll suggest for the last time out of respect for your volition.”

“Sounds like....huff, you’re going to say....huff, something funny.....”

“Come to me. I’ll create a time and space that you desire.”

Aisha frowned from the devil’s request.

“That’s not funny at all.”

“Why? Why do you refuse when I’m giving you a time and space you want? Wasn’t it your wish to be together with Elsword again, Dimension Princess?”

The devil asked because he really couldn’t understand. Aisha who didn’t even wipe the blood continuing to drip down from her head shouted with all her strength.

“Wishes....are something you achieve with your own strength! I’m a failure as a magician if I entrust my wish to someone else!”

“Funny thing for a loser to say.”

“Lose? Who?”

Aisha smiled.

“I didn’t lose yet. Don’t you have something you have to do....in order to rewind time?”

“.....”

At those words, the devil closed his eyes then opened them again. He had a slightly surprised expression.

“You couldn’t have....”

“Do you get it now? The fight hasn’t even started yet!”

“But you’ll go down right here.”

The devil nodded coldly then stretched out his hand. Aisha didn't submit and put strength in her eyes to glare at the devil.

"You've been through a lot of hardships all by yourself. Rest now, Aisha."

"....Your hardships has only just started."

Devil didn't answer and withdrew his hand. Short shockwave tearing apart space blew by and sound of a body collapsing was heard. But the devil didn't look back.

There was no one left who could stop him.

"Time has come....for me to become the king of time and space."

"Congratulations lord D!"

Karis was flattering him from behind but the devil didn't look back. He didn't intend to look back at anyone or anything.

He has come to far to look back.

"This universe is now mine."

It wasn't an exaggeration, it was just a simple truth. Who could possibly protest when someone who could freely wield time and space was saying he wants to rule the universe?

Anyone who could stop him had fallen and no one was left.

It was the time to achieve his long-cherished ambition. Those eternally long fights, eternally long pains, eternally long days.

Countless times and times again, all those short-lived events.

He remembered all those hundreds, thousands, ten thousands of years of time that has flowed without an exception.

He had no choice but to remember. He came this far for that sake.

The devil who was recalling the old memories one by one closed his eyes and opened his mouth with an indifferent tone.

"Eve."

Hoping no one knew about the longing and regret contained in his voice.



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